ALL GLORIES TO SRI GURU AND SRI GAURANGA

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume One

All Glory to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord
Sri Krsna Chaitanya

Bhakti Rakshak Divya Vani

Edited by Tridandi Swami Sripad B.A. Sagar
Assisted by Sriman Mahananda Prabhu

Dedication

This, the first volume of an intended series of publications of „Sermons“, is dedicated to the immense spirit of unrivalled dedication to Guru-seva excited in we disciples by Srila Guru Maharaja, the author of the worshipful, energetic conceptions contained herein

Introduction

Here in Koladvipa, Navadvipa, we find a happy place where the Absolute is the most generous in His benevolence. When the Absolute is distributing Himself, He becomes Sri Caitanyadeva. And that Sri Caitanya-deva in the highest stage of His mercy is found here in Koladvipa.

kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya
hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya
(C. Bha: Antya 3.541)

At Koladvipa - the Govardhana Hill of Vrndavana, concealed in Sri Navadvipa Dhama - the Most Generous Absolute expressed Himself in His maximum generosity. Without considering any crime, He absolved whoever He found. He accepted them all. After sannyasa, when He returned to Bengal with the intention of going to Vrndavana, He showed His most generous and dignified temperament at that time. He recruited the sinners of the world. Anyone who came to Him received the highest mercy. This is the speciality of this place. By 'place' we should not think of a mere geographical location. Of course, it has such a location, but really this is where the Most Generous Absolute gave Himself to the worst sinners. Here, even the most fallen souls receive the grace of the Lord.

Our highest necessity is distributed from here, Navadvipa Dhama; here is the key to the highest and sweetest mood within our heart. The key to enter into the conception of our sweetest home is given from here. Here is the key to that world of faith, sraddha, that world of love. If I can know my real prospect in life, I shall find that the key to my sweetest home is here. I am wandering in the jungle of an unsafe position, where I may be devoured at any moment. My so-called ego, my conception of my own self, is not eternal; it may be attacked and destroyed at any time. But the key is here, for my real life and my real home. This has been given to us by the spiritual experts.

God the father, God the son, and God the consort - we can know Him in different ways, and such truths are revealed here in Navadvipa Dhama. In the conception of God as father, we are what we are and He is supplying our food, home, and necessities in this plane. But if we truly approach Him, neglecting our wealth and achievements in this world to make a genuine heart's approach - not merely a formal approach - an exclusive approach - we shall discover what He is, as He is, and not as He is needed by us in our fallen stage. We are faulty. Our feeling of necessity is also imperfect, and thus our prayer is faulty. But He came to give us what is best from the standpoint of His will, and that is distributed from here. "Take Me, accept Me, I am your most innate and intimate friend. You have no friend like Me. I am guardian, friend, and everything to you. Come to Me."

Chapter One

Homeward Journey

Any experience about the Lord must come from upper to lower. It does not depend on us. We can only increase the intensity of our hankering, of our serving attitude (*sevonmukhata*), and whether He will descend to this plane or not depends on His whim. There is transcendental substance He moves according to His sweet will. He may come down or He may not, at His whim. He is free. We can only increase our earnestness for His presence. Although the potency and the potent are inseparably connected, we must generally know our-selves to be of the marginal potency.

He is everywhere - He is nowhere; everything is within Him - nothing is in Him. Such is His peculiar and mystic position (Bg. 9.4-6). Thus, our duty is to try to serve Him. We should not put much emphasis on 'feeling' Him either by mind, by body, or even by intelligence. He is everywhere, and He is nowhere: in a flash He may show, "Yes, I am here"; yet, when we are earnestly searching for Him, He may be nowhere to be found. His nature is independent. We can search, but we cannot say that we shall find Him.

He can only be served through His devotees... Real devotion is unconditional

Aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam, adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va: our duty is to devote ourselves cent-per-cent and most intensely for Him. We are only to serve Him. And service does not mean that we must necessarily come into direct contact with Him. Remote service is also service; through His devotee it becomes tangible. We should try to serve Him through His devotees, without expectation of any reward. We should have no desire except to serve, even without expecting to see Him once, to have His darsana. We shall only want to be utilized by Him. The little energy we have must be utilized for His cause. We are His potency, and we should prove that we belong to Him. Mahaprabhu says, "He may embrace me or reject me, or He may even be indifferent towards me. Whatever He likes, He may do, but I have no alternative but to serve Him." We must adopt such an exclusive and unconditional attitude. Not that, "If He doesn't want to reciprocate according to my will, I won't like to approach Him; so I shall join the atheists or the mayavadis. If You don't come forward to satisfy me, then I shall seek my own way - I don't want You!" If there is any tinge of such an attitude, we are far, far away.

Yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato, mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah. „We have no alternative but to serve You." To search means to serve: 'I want to be utilized for His cause. However petty the service may be, nothing is petty when in His connection, the least connection, even from far away. He need not please me, even by giving His darsana in a lightning way. Everything depends on His will."

Unconditional offering unto Him shows faith of the highest type. If our offering is conditional, we shall have to remain far from Him. The characteristic of the highest faith is absolutely unconditional: "I am only to be satisfied with just the chance to serve Him from afar, through some medium; or many mediums, not only one. *Dasa-dasa-dasanudasatvam* - servant of the servant of the servant of the servant . . . I have His connection from afar, and my energy passes through the devotees, towards Him, towards the center of fulfillment. Whatever my position may be, I want

my connection with the greatest fulfillment of the whole world!" Everyone is searching for such fulfillment of all their innermost necessities.

Sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja (Bg. 18.66): the search for Him eliminates all other duties. A true devotee thinks, "There is no obligation to anyone except one, and He is my Lord, Krsna." And His most laudable and greatest servitors are those who are in contact with His greatest agent. Not His direct contact, but contact with the greatest agent of His service will constitute the safer and higher relationship of *ananya-bhajana*, exclusive service eliminating all else.

Be fully purged of the enjoying spirit ...to be a member of the infinite world

No trace of exploitation should be traced in us. We should not run after any type of enjoyment including even the enjoyment of ‚God-association.' We must be fully purged of the enjoying spirit. If a trace of enjoyment remains in us, we shall have to remain in one of the planes of this brahmanda, this universe, such as Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, and Satya-loka. And if any tinge of renunciation or retiring spirit is in us, we will not be allowed to enter into the world of infinity, Vaikuntha. Kuntha means 'limitation,' and Vaikuntha means the unlimited world. We want to be a member of the infinite world. 'Finite' only refers to the attempt of our separate interest to measure the infinite, and thereby, we conceive of finite. When our ego wants to measure a portion of the infinite, considering, "This is my kingdom, that is my friend's kingdom, etc.," then whatever we see with our separate interest is maya - misconception and misunderstanding in the infinite. All such things must be dissolved. And the attitude of retirement, "If I can't enjoy, I shall stop work; I shall go on strike" - that type of reactionary mentality must also be abandoned.

All points, everywhere, are active to satisfy the center

Then, we shall be face to face with the positive side only. What is the positive side? It is the wave from the center, lila, the play of the Absolute. That wave is fulfilling the desire of the Supreme Lord, and we will be face to face with that. If the tendency for separate interest or reactionary retirement remains in us, we cannot have a touch of that eternal flow to satisfy the Absolute. When we are free from these two kinds of whims, we can come into connection with the eternal flow where all points, everywhere, are active to satisfy the center. Such a plane is not dry; it is happy, construc-tive, and nourishing, and that, we shall be able to feel. Only a small touch of it will make us understand that we do not want a particle of anything else. This is our homeward journey, and any other want or demand will keep us in a foreign country filled with death, disease, infirmity, rebirth - all these troubles. These troubles all occur because of misconception and identification of the soul with mortal things.

bhukti-mukti-sprha yavat
pisaci hrdi vartate
tavad bhakti-sukhasyatra
katham abhyudayo bhavet
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 2.22)

"How can the joy of holy devotion appear in the heart as long as it is haunted by the ghosts of desire for exploitation and renunciation?"

These two ideas of renunciation and enjoyment are foreign to us. They possess us, like ghosts. They have taken possession of our ego and are playing with it. We are prey in their mischievous hands, and we must escape from such a conspiracy of maya. We must be free members of the infinite world where the noble flow of dedication flourishes. No limited aspiration exists there; a current of wholesale dedication flows towards the center and all concerned. And that is our home, the soil where we can live eternally. There, all are individuals, and there is no death, no birth, no infirmity and no disease. Our inner self will emerge and mingle with the residents of that land.

Real devotion is a very, very rare achievement

Our own experience should not be easily relied upon, such as thinking, "This is God, this is my conception - I have a touch of God." There was a Babaji who was thought by many to be a great devotee. Whenever he took the name, he shed incessant tears. Liquid also oozed from his nose, and he was seen to be in some abnormal meditating position. On either side of him his attendants would be constantly cleansing his tears and face with napkins, as he madly chanted the name. Some atheistic persons considered that he was displaying religious fanaticism, while common people who had some simple faith in God estimated him to be a very high-class devotee. But our Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura Prabhupada, rejected him and his antics as devoid of proper God conception.

atha nihsattvah - nisarga-picchila-svante, tad abhyasa-pare 'pi ca
sattvabhasam vinapi syuh, kvapy asru-pulakadayah
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Daksina, 3.89)

"Whenever shedding tears, horripilation, etc., are seen in persons whose hearts are soft externally and hard internally, and who are habituated to crying, rapture, etc., even though they do not possess a semblance of divine emotion - such an imitative sentiment should be known as totally unsubstantial and lifeless."

Mental imitation of devotion is possible, even with-out a tinge of pure devotion. In a drama also we may find a man who is fully drunk playing the part of a devotee, shedding tears and dancing madly as if he is a great devotee. By practicing, one can acquire that mental condition of shedding tears, and one can show many feats as though he were a real devotee. Merely the display of some peculiar external characteristics does not prove the presence of pure devotion. Real devotion is su-durllabha - a very, very rare achievement.

When we feel we are bereft... that is a sober and healthy

When we can neglect the proposal of emancipation, we might think that we possess a speck of real devotion. In the face of devotion, emancipation is belittled as very lowly (moksa-laghuta-krt, Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 1.14). Yet, devotion is so rarely to be found, we may not expect that we have attained it (sudurllabha, ibid.). In one word, when we say that we have some devotion, we are not in devotion. Rather, when we can feel that we have nothing, although we have

no aspiration for any other thing, at that point we may be making some progress. We do genuinely want something, although we can't clearly understand what; but we appreciate the devotees and the divine scriptures of devotion. When our appreci-ation is on that side, yet we feel we are bereft, that is a sober and healthy position. So vacant. We ought to remember that although we are negative, infinitesimal parts, we have come forward for a relationship with the Infinite, the Absolute. What price should we be prepared to pay for that? What form does that price take? We ought not to purchase such a thing very cheaply. To serve the devotees will be tangible, and to continue with the devotional practices and program that has been recommended by the scriptures and saints is most important. To go on - that in itself should be our reward. We are reading about Him, we are serving the saints and hearing their words. This is an engagement in itself. If we are thus satisfied, we have something that must not be underestimated.

"Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him."

There is a great value in having the company of the saints and the scriptures, without mixing with the robbery of this material world. What is present here at this moment becomes nothing at the next. We are not of this world full of treachery. We are disgusted with the treacherous aspect of the world that charms us and engages us in a treacherous soil. Now something - next moment, nothing. We must give that up and try for something substantial: sat, cit, anandam - eternal existence, uncontaminated consciousness, and finally, the fulfillment of all our inner necessities - the corresponding engagement of the whole of our existence. *Prati anga lagi kande, prati anga mora* - "Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him." (Jnana Dasa.) And Krsna says, "Only I can give you complete fulfillment, so come to Me and give up everything else":

Acting on the basis of faith... in the association of His exclusive devotees

sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo, moksayisyami ma sucah
(Bg. 18.66)

"I shall accept the reaction you have earned in the relativity of this mortal world - I shall clear your debt! You need only come to My feet." If we are charmed by this universal call of the Lord and we try to abide by it, then that is sufficient. If we are answering that absolute call to our best ability, Krsna assures us: "I shall free you of your burden; you simply come to Me. Give up all your duties." Faith in this call, and acting on the basis of such faith is a great thing in us. We should try to follow this according to our best capacity, and this is possible only in the company of the exclusive devotees of the Lord.

We shall relish being in the company of His devotees. We have found children of the same soil - we are meeting our home associates. If our internal satisfaction is of that type, we are holding something of a safe position. We want to recognize our home, but we are now traveling in a foreign land. We should try to find the inner feeling of our hearts, without wanting some miracle.

We are but tiny souls and many things may be miraculous to us. Yogis and mystic persons can show many miracles and captivate us. It is easy to capture a tiny soul by miracles. There are

many powerful miracle--men in the world. Let God save us from their hands! We must not allow ourselves to be the prey of so many miracles; may that charm leave us, once and for all.

yadi karibe krsna-nama sadhu-sanga kara
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-vancha dure parihara
(Prema-vivarta)

"If you are going to chant the holy name, keep the association of the pure devotee and totally abandon all your desires for enjoyment, liberation, yogic perfections or miracles.

May all these alternative prospects - exploitation, renunciation, miracles - retire forever. We want only the Lord of our heart, who can award the deepest satisfaction. All the atoms of our innermost constitution have their corresponding engagement with Him, and that too, is of the highest quality. This proposal is given by the Gaudiya Vaisnava school under the direction of Sri Caitanyadeva and Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

Try your fortune, however negligible it may be

In the Vrndavana proposal, the Infinite is in the nearest position with the finite: aprakrta. Aprakrta is where the Infinite has come nearest to the finite, as though one of them. When He is so close, so near, no one can easily recognize whether He is infinite or not. Mahaprabhu has suggested to us, "Try for the chance for your fortune in Vrndavana. There is such a wonderful process: Nanda and Yasoda (Krsna's father and mother) have captured the Absolute and He is crawling in their compound (*aham iha nandam vande yasyalinde param brahma*). Try to secure a position there, however negli-gible it may be. Try your fortune." So, we are in search of such a fortune where all other proposals are eliminated.

kam prati kathayitum ise
samprati ko va pratitim ayatu
go-pati-tanaya-kunje
gopa-vadhuti-vitam brahma
(Padyavali, 98)

"To whom can I tell it, and whoever will believe it, that the Supreme Absolute, Param Brahman, the Paramour of the damsels of Vraja, is enjoying in the groves on the banks of the Yamuna?"

It is inconceivable that the Brahman, the greatest, the Absolute, has come to search for the least love of the cowherd damsels of the Gopi class. He has approached in such a near and close way, and in such an ordinary, rural style. Try your fortune there. We are out to do just that, under the guidance of Sri Caitanyadeva, who is understood to be the combina-tion of the positive and negative aspects of the Absolute. The positive is busy distributing Himself to others. Mahaprabhu is that infinitely and inconceivably generous aspect of the Supreme.

Exclusive preference for service to Sri Guru

We must not search for any sentiment in ourselves, divine or otherwise. Once, one disciple was engaged in the service of his Guru, when a messenger from Vaikuntha came to fetch that disci-

ple, saying, "The Lord is satisfied with your service to your Gurudeva and he is calling for you, so please come."

The disciple replied, "No, no, I have no time to attend to your call of Vaikuntha; I am very busy in the service of my Gurudeva."

This should be our attitude. "I have my engagement under the guidance of the Vaisnavas here; I don't like to be disturbed from this position."

A safe and entirely wholesome position

sakhyaya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu nityam
dasyaya te mama raso 'stu rave 'stu satyam

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, the greatest exponent of the faith of servitude to Srimati Radharani, Radha-dasyam, says, "I won't allow myself to become fascinated by the proposal of the higher level service as a friend, sakhya. Rather, I shall tend always to do the lower service, dasya, the service of the servant. I shall not consider myself to -be a high-class servitor and I shall always tend to go towards the lower class of service. But He may forcibly take me to a higher service - "No, you are no longer to serve there; now you must serve in this higher category."

"But I consider that I am not fit for that confidential service, my Lord. You may engage the higher servitors in Your confidential group, while I may serve in the lower level."

The tendency of the servant will always be toward the -lower service

That sort of tendency is safe for us. We should always be tending towards the lower service; and it is His business to forcibly take us up to a higher group, should He wish: "No, you are qualified to render such service, and you should no longer remain in the lower group." But the tendency of the servitor will always be toward the lower service - dasyaya te mama raso 'stu: "I would like to be engaged in service as a servant, not as a friend." That should be the normal tendency of a devotee. With such a mood, he is safe. Even in that world, he should have no ambition except to be the servant of the servant of the servant . . . Hearing of such things from the devotees and from the scriptures, we may think such a conception to be exaggeration; but it is the reality, and we should search out this pristine substance within us. This is a safe and wholesome position.

Chapter Two

The Direction to Your Wealth

Sri Caitanyadeva is both Radha and Krsna combined. He is Krsna in the mood of Radha, searching for Himself. He is both the positive and the negative aspects of the Absolute combined. The Sankara school and other impersonalists claim that when the positive and negative combine, the result is a kind of equilibrium. But according to the Vaisnava philosophy, the combination is dynamic. His nature becomes that of searching for Himself - searching for His own positive self, in the mood of the negative. In that search, He distributes Himself to others. The negative attracts the positive, and the positive is thus distributed to the public. This is the essence of Sri Caitanyadeva. The intimate associates of the Lord have revealed such a conception, and we shall be able to conceive it according to the intensity and degree of our faith.

Instruments to measure the infinite

Faith is the only instrument for the finite to measure the infinite. To survey the infinite, all other methods are futile. Faith is the most spacious substance within us. It can cover a long, long distance. In the infinite, what faith can we have in faith? We fear blind faith. Yet, in the infinite, the impossible becomes possible. Everything is possible, but only faith has the possibility of connecting us with the infinite, while all other methods are useless.

When our experience deceives us, faith will save us

Sraddha, faith, can go a long distance. And we shall be able to feel and conceive that faith is not merely imaginary. It has its tangible position, a most efficient position within us. When we can disconnect from all phases of perceptual experience, we can live in faith alone. When all the wealth of our experience deceives us and makes treachery with us, our faith will save us.

High prospects for one interred in a burial ground

The whole world of our experience will vanish one day, with the final wholesale dissolution (*janma mrtyu jara vyadhi duhkha-dosanudarsanam*, Bg. 13.9), but faith will remain, faithfully attending us. That is the innate thing with our soul. And with the wholesale dissolution of our body, mind, and senses, the whole world of our experience will go where? No one knows. The sun, the moon, the ether, the air - everything will vanish in wholesale dissolution. Only faith will live, even at that stage. Faith is eternal substance within us, and we are told that with the favorable circumstances of faith we can go back to God, back to home. Back to home sweet home! Such highest prospect is given to us who are in this world of mortality, which is a burial ground and cremation ground. Here, everything is bound to be buried.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
All that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."
-Gray's Elegy

This is the world of experience everything leads but to the grave. But faith is not treacherous. It will remain within, with the soul, and grant hope, Faith will prospect, and sustenance. And what kind of grant home sustenance? Home comfort. Back to God, comfort back to home. When there is the proposal of such an alternative, who would be such a fool to run after the experiences of this 'civilized' atomic world? Experience and science are all the jaws of death.

Faith is nothing vague.

Everything may vanish but faith stands forever

ya nisa sarva-bhutanam, tasyam jagarti samyami
yasyam jagrati bhutani, sa nisa pasyato muneh
(Bg. 2.69)

Some persons are awake in the world of experience. Their day is the world of experience and their night is the soul's world, God's world. And another class of men are wakeful in the soul's world and are sleeping in this world of experience. This world is darkness to them, and they are quite awake in the world of faith. They find that the world of faith is a permanent world.

The soul, however tiny, has a substantial position in eternity; it is an eternal factor in that world of faith. There, we shall find: "Whatever I see is eternal. Nothing will be effaced at any time. I am a member of the world of reality, and through faith I can reach such a subtle plane that never dies or changes. There is such a subtle, higher plane, and my soul is a member of that plane. The soul is wakeful there and is asleep in this world of experience, having no connection with it. And the man of the world of experience with flesh and blood, he is wakeful here, whereas that real world - the soul world - is like dark night to him."

In our present condition it may seem almost non-existent, but such a plane is the substantial eternal reality. Its existence supersedes all. All may vanish, but faith stands forever. Faith is the particular potency of Srimati Radharani.

The halo of Srimati Radharani

sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana
bhakta-gane sukha cite 'hladini' - karana
(C.c. Madhya 8.158)

Ecstasy personified is Krsna Himself, and He feels, tastes and enjoys Himself; but only through faith is it possible to transmit and distribute that ecstasy and joy to others. Faith is the very nature of the hladini-sakti, the ecstasy potency, which is represented in full by Srimati Radharani. It can transmit total Krsna consciousness to the devotees outside. Faith is the halo of Srimati Radharani, by the light of which others may understand Krsna. When the negative combines with the positive, realization of Their function is distributed to all other negative parts. The central, 'mother' negative can expand and transmit such faith and joy. Sraddha, faith, is a special substance about which we must inquire. It is not merely abstract.

We are wakeful in this material world, but there are others who are completely awake in that plane of faith, while this world of matter, this tangible world of enjoyment and exploitation, is underground to them; it is far, far away from their conception. They are deeply engaged in the world of service, through sraddha, faith (*ye nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami*).

Devotees won't disturb His Sweet Will

To them, even to see Krsna is a type of enjoyment. They think, "No, we won't disturb His sweet will; when-ever He likes to, He may call for us, and then we shall have a chance to see Him - otherwise not." If for my personal satisfaction I desire to see Krsna, "O Krsna, come and stand before me so that I can see You and satisfy my eyes or inner hankering," this is a kind of imposition by our exploiting nature. A devotee does not want this. Actual devotees do not allow these thoughts to enter their minds, but they maintain the mood, "Whenever He wishes to, He will call for me, and then I shall have a chance to see Him."

The height of devotion found in the Goswamis

Madhavendra Puri maintained his body by eating only what automatically came to him without begging from others; otherwise, he would fast. One day Krsna Himself came and supplied some food and He asked, "Why, Puri, don't you go and beg for food? Why do you act in this way, sometimes fasting?" Hearing of this incident, we may think that Madhavendra Puri was greatly fortunate - Krsna Himself came and supplied food to him. But we find higher devotion in Srila Sanatana Goswami.

When Srimati Radharani came and supplied food-stuffs to Srila Rupa Goswami for cooking paramanna, milk-rice, Srila Sanatana Goswami was very disturbed at heart.

"What is this Rupa? Did you aspire after something for me?"

"Yes, I did, my lord, my Gurudeva. I thought that if I could obtain some milk and rice I would be able to prepare some paramanna which is very dear to you. Then I would invite you to take that prasada."

"Oh, you have done a great wrong! This is so tasteful, I have never found such tasteful things in this world. Therefore, it must have some extraordinary origin. Who gave you the necessary ingredients you wanted for this preparation?"

Srila Rupa Goswami replied, "A girl came and gave it to me in the name of her family guardians."

Srila Sanatana Goswami wanted to know who the girl was, but she was nowhere to be found in the nearby village. Sanatana Goswami could understand the Srimati Radharani Herself had come and supplied those ingredients.

"We are searching after Her in order to serve Her, and She came and served us? What is this? Just the opposite! My dear brother, what have you done? You wanted some- thing for me and that was supplied by Her? We want Her so that we may serve Her but She came and served us,

and went away. This is a great misfortune." He was greatly dissatisfied and left that place with these thoughts.

Rupa Goswami could not take that prasadam. He thought, "I invited my Guru Srila Sanatana Goswami in order to serve and satisfy him, but quite the opposite result came. He has left dissatisfied." He ran after Sanatana Goswami to try and satisfy him.

So, we see that Krsna Himself brought foodstuffs to Madhavendra Puri, and that may be considered a very great fortune; yet, in this instance with Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana Goswami, a similar event occurred but was considered a grave misfortune. In the higher type of devotion there is never any desire that Krsna or His Associates will come to serve and supply us, or that He will show Himself to us. To impose our whim on Him is not actual service. Whatever He likes to do He may do. And whatever may be necessary from us, we shall consider ourselves fortunate if we are given the chance to supply it. Exhaustively elim-inating all our desires in the extreme, we are to place ourselves fully at the disposal of the command of the Supreme Lord, who is never to carry out any order or wish of ours.

The faith of the higher devotees

By nature, He is eager to supply everything to His devotees (*yoga-ksemam vahamy aham*; Bg. 9.22). But the higher devotees do not like that Krsna will supply them with anything, or that He will render service to them. Such is the purity of their devotion. Through their faith, they think, "He is my Lord. I don't want to have His darsana merely to satisfy my lower faculty of perceiving that 'He exists.'" To consider, "If I can see Him, I shall be satisfied that He exists," is a very low standard of faith. We have no capacity to see Him. To make Him our object, keeping ourselves the subject, is a low standard of faith. But higher, intense faith fully proves that He is; that wonderful cause of everything - He is present.

Give up everything; try only to have faith

A certain section claims, like the philosopher Carvaka, that, No, no, there is no God or higher substance. Whatever we see on the surface is everything." But deeper faith says that the cause is He from whom everything emanates, He by whom everything is maintained, and He into whom everything finally enters:

yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani,
yat prayanty abhisamvisanti, tad vijijnasasva,
tad eva brahma
(Taittiriya Upanisad, 3.1.1)

Merely the effect is not everything, but the cause has its existence. And what is the nature of the cause? Some identify Him as Brahman, some as Paramatman, and some as Bhagavan. God is the destiner and designer of everything - He has created everything, and He is controlling everything. Everything is automatically exist-ing with Him, as a particular potency of His.

Give up everything; try only to have faith, and everything will be found. Everything is there (*sakala chadiya bhai, sraddhadevira guna gai*). Do not demand for any proof, because that is me-

anness. To search after proof as to whether He 'is' or 'is not' is meanness. With deep faith, automatically it is known, "Yes, He is."

yo mam pasyati sarvatra, sarvan ca mayi pasyati
tasyaham na pranasyami, sa ca me na pranasyati
(Bg. 6.30)

"For one who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, I do not remain unseen and he also is not unnoticed by Me: he never sways in his thought of Me."

Everything is in Him, and He is also everywhere. This is the characteristic of He for whom we are searching.

Omkara, the monosyllable Om, is the seed of theism. Om means Yes. Always, wherever we cast our glance to search in one word the answer is yes. "Yes, what you are searching for, is. You are searching for happiness, pleasure, joy, fulfillment. You are in want, and in one word, - 'yes,' fulfillment is there."

Intimacy which even the Vedas could not give to the public

Om takes the form of Gayatri, then Veda and Vedanta Sutra; then it takes the shape of Srimad-Bhagavatam and the lila, the divine pastimes, of the Lord. After they had the opportunity of participating in the Rasa-lila of Krsna, the Sruti, the Upanisads, remarked, "Oh, we could not conceive this much. We could not inform the public about rasa, ecstasy, of such a high type. Raso vai sah - He is rasa, anandam, ecstasy. It plays in such a way? We could not understand so much, and we could not give it out to the public. So, our Lord, we beg Your forgiveness. In the full play of your joyous pastimes, the magnitude of Your ecstatic nature is inconceivable. Please forgive us, we failed to reveal to the public that the highest joy is of such fulfillment in the extreme; so much so, that kama, lustiness, the most nasty thing in the mortal world, is found here to be the most beautiful, and of the highest type of charm. Even the union of men and women, which is normally to be hated and rejected - we find that this ecstatic joy includes even that. We could not understand, our Lord. Rather, the conception we presented is dry in comparison to this joyous life."

Faith in the devotees grants us the most substantial help

Thus, we should be careful to appreciate genuine faith. We should approach the devotees for faith. They are like many pillars of faith. We are told that electricity can flow everywhere, but practically, we must be connected with the dynamo. Dynamos can show electrical power, and similarly, there are many devotees, past and present, in whom we can find real Godliness. They stand like pillars of faith, in their dealings and example. If we approach Christ, his ideal and sacrifice will encourage faith in us. If we examine the history of Prahlada, we will come to understand what a great devotee he is. Our hearts will become filled to the brim: "Here is faith - here is the presence of the Almighty."

When we pay heed to the devotees, with their help we are raised to a particularly high standard of faith. We are in a safe position when we turn our attention towards the devotees. They are like

so many pillars standing and proving His presence. Summarily neglecting the enjoyable objects of this world, they stand with their heads erect, proving and declaring their experience of the Supreme Entity.

The devotees are above even sastra, the scriptures

Faith in the devotees, the Vaisnavas, grants us the most substantial help. Such a position is not flickering, but firm. One who has faith in the Vaisnavas achieves devotion of a tangible character. Otherwise, with only abstract faith in the Lord, without faith in the devotees, we are but beginners, in the stage of kanistha-adhikara. This is an unreliable platform. Our devotion reaches a reliable standard when we can find devotion in the devotees, and recognize their importance. The devotees are above even sastra, the scriptures. The tangible stage when our real faith in them develops is the middle stage, madhyama-adhikara. In that stage, the opposition of the non-devotees may sometimes seem to partially hide the Lord in our consciousness, like an eclipse.

But these barriers within are dissolved when direct contact with the Supreme awakens. In the highest stage, uttama-adhikara, one can trace the Supreme Entity everywhere and in every movement (*yo mam pasyati sarvatra*, Bg. 6.30; *sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah*, Bha: 11.2.45). It is His will, He is there, in His lila. He may play hide and seek with His devotees. Sometimes He may be clearly visible to them, sometimes He may hide, and the devotees cry, "Oh, where are You, my Lord? I don't feel Your presence, I can't see You. How can I stand? How can I lead my life? Without You, I can't live. You are so charming and so joyous and the giver of so much fulfillment; I can't live without Your relationship." In this way, they begin to wail and cry.

When we find His personal beauty and charm, we realize that this is the cause of everything, the final objective

Everything is dependent upon Him alone. If we attempt to trace the cause of everything, we will find that the cause is something which in turn has its cause which also has its cause, and soon. But when we find His personal beauty and charm, we will realize, "Yes, this is the final objective that we and the whole world are searching for." There is a Bengali song -

"O mountain, O Himalayas, O Alps, O Sumeru, what are you searching for, with your head erect? Have you seen the creator of this world and have you attained the fulfillment of your life. Have you seen Him. In this way, the devotee feels in his heart that everything is searching for the Lord who is the fulfillment of life itself. In the phenomenal world of birth and death, there is nothing tangible that should attract our attention. Our inner heart's search is for sat - the eternal, cit - consciousness that satisfies our perception, and anandam - the satisfaction of our hankering after beauty and love. When love awakens, the function of the brain retires. We will understand that love is the fulfillment of life. This is a special phase of our life. Wherever we may be, we are automatically always searching, searching, searching ... searching for that 'Yes,' ,Om.' Om means, a big 'Yes.' What you are searching for - it is. What your inner heart is hankering after - that is existing.

Where the Infinite comes so close, the finite thinks He is one of us

Your search must progress from the apparent to the inner substance. The Lord of your search is there. Thus, Omkara takes us to Gayatri, then the Veda, Vedanta, and Srimad-Bhagavatam, which describes the ecstatic, joyful side of the Lord. The Infinite comes so close to the finite that the finite thinks, He is one of us." He plays the part of such a close friend that we think He is one of us. This is His highest grace and kindness upon us, and this is our highest attainment, which is found in Vrndavana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught that we must abandon everything and make our only aim that Vrndavana Lord Sri Krsna: svayam Bhagavan, God of gods, Lord of lords. He is the source of unlimited manifestations of supernatural power. Therefore, Mahaprabhu announced, "Search for Sri Krsna. You have no other duty in this world. Take His name, talk about Him, and whatever you do, go on in this way. Very swiftly, you will achieve the fulfillment of your life. Go on taking His name, go on searching for Him, go on talking about Him whether you are sleeping, eating, quarreling - whatever you are doing, combine it with Krsna."

But that search for Krsna should not be hypocritical. The sincere seeker will receive help and direction from the real devotees. With the help of the scriptures and the devotees, and with sincerity within you, go on searching after Krsna, everywhere. Whoever you meet, talk about Krsna, and don't talk of anything that is a prey to death. Wife, children, money everything will evaporate at the next moment, so don't think about them any longer. But in every step of your life, do everything only for the Eternal Joy. Krsna is not your concoction. He can be known through sadhu and sastra, not this mundane world of your enjoyment. Nor can you find Krsna in abhorrence - renunciation, but Krsna is with the sadhu, the pure saint; Krsna is the fulfillment of the positive inquiry of the heart.

Those who are carried away by the charm of the external world cannot understand their inner temperament; they are unfortunate (*na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum, durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah*, Bha: 7.5.31). The main necessity is to keep company with the sadhu who has real faith in Krsna. Such a sadhu, is very, very rare in this world, but if you want to achieve the highest good, make that ideal the crown of your head - in any way possible, take the help of that association.

sadhu-sanga, sadhu-sanga - sarva-sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya
(C.c. Madhya 22.54)

"A moment's association with the sadhu awards all success, and this is the verdict of all the scriptures."

kim pramattasya bahubhir, paroksair hayanair iha
varam muhurtam viditam, ghatate sreyase yatah
(Bha: 2.1.12)

"Imperceptibly, many, many years pass uselessly in the life of a person intoxicated by mundane pleasures. Better if only for a moment he realizes that he is losing valuable time, for he may thus become serious to attain his eternal benefit."

Here, Sukadeva Goswami says that one moment is sufficient to solve the whole problem of life, if it is properly utilized in sadhu-sanga. At all costs, try to utilize the opportunity of sadhu-sanga, the association of the agent of Krsna. What is the necessity of living for ages and ages if we are unconscious of our own interest? One moment properly utilized is sufficient to solve the whole problem of our life, for which we are eternally wandering about in this plane. We must be wakeful to our personal interest, not negligent.

With the help of a proper guide, search your own heart

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to direct us to our real interest within: "You do not know your own heart. You are a foreigner to your own heart and its demand. There is a wealth within your heart - try to find it: eliminate the foreign things, and you will find your heart to be a temple of Krsna. With the help of a proper guide, search your own heart and you will find Krsna there. This is not a foreign thing to you. Every heart is a temple of the Lord. It is your property, it is your home. Back to God, back to home."

Chapter Three

The Success of Faith

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written:

sakala chadiya bhai sraddhadevira guna gai
yanra krpa bhakti dite pare

"Giving up everything, let us sing in praise of Sraddha-devi - faith - whose grace can take us to Krsna."

Sraddha, faith, is the most subtle thing, and it is also the most tangible. It is not imaginary. We must realize that it is reality, it is concrete, and not merely an abstract sentiment of mere individual consciousness. Faith is universal as the most fundamental element that can connect us with the finest objective.

Power and grandeur are not proof of faith

Through electricity or radio we can establish communication over a long distance. The science is very subtle, and not known to anyone and everyone, yet, we cannot deny its existence; it has its tangible position. But faith is much more subtle, and through it one can establish both higher contact and reciprocation. Subtle faith is not approachable by anyone and everyone; it has its tangible existence and it may function in any circumstance if we have its peculiar contact. We cannot give false statements that we possess it; our power and grandeur are not necessarily any proof of its presence in us. Despite great pomp and show, all we personify may be falsehood. We should be very cautious to maintain our contact with genuine faith.

The main qualification for faith

Of course, sincerity is the main requirement for faith's connection. No price, however valuable in this world, can purchase it. The qualification is laulyam - our sincere and earnest desire for the thing. No one can purchase the Absolute, and no price can purchase Him. The absolute necessity is our sincere desire and earnestness. With insincerity, we cannot make trade with Him; He is not so foolish as to become an object of trade for anybody! Sincere desire for Him is required, and that will awaken the conception to serve Him. We want Him, sincerely - through affection. We love Him, so we desire Him. And to love means to sacrifice for the object of our love.

Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhu has given a beautiful definition of the word 'Bhagavan':
bhajaniya sarva-sad-guna-visista - "The Supreme Lord, Bhagavan is of such a nature that everyone who comes in contact with Him will want to serve Him and to sacrifice themselves for His satisfaction." This is the result of faith in its developed form. He is so noble, we shall think that if we die to satisfy Him, our life's objective will be fulfilled. His noble quality is such that it draws so much sacrificing spirit for Him; it draws everything towards Him. "Die to live." Faith is such.

The agents of faith

We are in the ocean of faith, and the devotees are the essential agents. Each helps the other. We are much relieved from the fatigue and trials of a long journey if we have a companion or the association of a group. Similarly, in this ocean, if we obtain the help of devotees of similar nature to ours, that will be most conducive. Even our Guru Maharaja, in a speech he delivered on Vyasa-puja, his Holy Appearance Day, addressed his disciples, "*Vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*: Oh my friends, who can give me relief from danger."
"To me, you are my deliverers from danger! In the ocean of faith, it is very difficult to journey onward alone, so you have come to help me in my dangerous, ambitious journey in the infinite. You have come, and you are engaging me in talking about only Him, and so, you have given me some engagement. Otherwise, to live and move alone in the infinite is very difficult, troublesome and dangerous. You have all come to hear something, and in this exchange of talks about Him the situation has been made very safe and easy to journey so far toward Vaikuntha."

Faith is the only capital - Faith in the real devotees brings us to a tangible thing

We must be conscious of our real position when we are searching for Krsna. It is not easy, and also, it is very easy - both simultaneously. Faith is the only capital by which we can make our journey towards the Infinite. Bhakti, devotion, has no beginning and no end (*ahaituky apratihata*). There is no beginning - it is there already. Before we came to know about it, it was there. It was there, it is there, it will be there. No one ca resist it - that bhakti, that faith, is irresistible. It is part of the eternal substance. Its very nature is eternity - none can oppose it. We only have to make contact and associate with it, and the wave will carry us towards our goal. And if we can have the company of the devotees, the journey becomes very easy and pleasant, whereas to go alone is very difficult.

In the progress of our contact with faith, when we come to take benefit from devotees and have faith in them, we are more safe and our progress is also tangible - it comes to reality. From a vague, abstract position, faith becomes deeper within us. We can then recognize many others with the same objective in life, and the journey becomes easier. It becomes conceivable. It comes into measurement. When we have faith in the real devotees, we can come into contact with such a tangible thing.

Thus, the position of the devotees is very important in our journey, especially in the middle stage. In the primary stage, not much importance is given to the devotees. With only a vague conception from the scriptures and with the help of previous accumulated merits (sukrti), the journey is begun. But gradually, the beginners find that to journey onwards in the infinite is not an easy thing: "We thought that with a little progress we could attain the desired end, but now we find that it is not so." When we come to consider the real position of devotion, of what is God - He is universal, He is the ultimate goal - we may gradually become disappointed. But if along the way we take help from the devotees of similar objective, we shall feel much relief by their company, even though the destination may be far away. The difficulties of the journey are more prominent in the second stage. In the primary stage, we are not very exclusive in our objective, and so, we do not experience much difficulty. Real difficulties begin when we enter into the journey exclusively, with no other objective than to engage our whole energy towards that high and elevated path. And if we actually achieve a touch of the highest stage, the maha-bhagavata

stage, the journey again becomes easier. But the middle portion is difficult, and at that stage the devotees are very important to save us. This is the period of both tangible acquisition and difficulty; our failings on the path to realization are to be rectified in this middle stage.

The association of devotees is of ultimate importance

When we enter into war, in the beginning we have much hope. We feel confident. But the real test is when the fighting begins. And when we finally conquer, we again become very satisfied. But the middle - when the war is being conducted - that is the difficult period. At that time, our co-workers, our comrades who fight along-side us, are very, very important to us. "I am not alone, but there are many others battling alongside me in that middle fighting period of war." Those companions are important. Some may disappear from the field but there will be others to encourage me.

Similarly, on this journey, we may see that many stalwarts are falling. It may discourage us to see such respected persons -going away - falling in the middle path. Nonetheless, in the midst of those unfavorable circumstances there are others who are bravely making progress with unflinching faith, and they will help us. To stick it out to the end is difficult - but important and valuable. The test comes and shows how much faith we have. Nothing comes in vain, and we must take everything that happens in that way.

There may be so many stalwarts, like Bhisma and Drona, who fall flat in the battlefield, but still we must go on (*karmany evadhikaras te, ma phalesu kadacana*, Bg. 2.47). We are out to fight to the end. We must achieve our end of life, and we can imbibe such firmness from the character of the devotees. The sastra will also offer helpful advice, but the association of the devotees is nonetheless of ultimate importance.

How to persevere on this journey?

We need lasting faith, not flickering faith: "Oh, I attempted for some time but I did not find any tangible fruit from bhakti, so I left"; or, "To me, it seemed very, very vague. When I began, I thought this to be something tangible that I would quickly attain, but it is not so. It is uncertain. I am giving so much energy for the cause, but still the desired result is not achieved." Previous tendencies also draw from the negative side, and so we find that many stalwarts are falling.

Still, we have to persevere in this journey, and we shall have to take courage from those who are standing and who are deeply engaged. Though it is told hundreds of times that the Absolute is infinite, in the beginning we still tend to take it in the conception of the finite. We are accustomed to think of anything and everything in terms of finite. So, although we hear that it is infinite, it is Vaikuntha, it has no limit - we nonetheless cannot grasp the proper meaning. But when we make practical progress, many new conceptions must come to our knowledge.

Now, when our Guru Maharaja addressed his disciples as *vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*, "My dear friends who have come to deliver me from danger," we should, of course, recognize such a statement from both the relative and absolute standpoints. Students are a necessary part of a professor - when a professor has students, he feels the practical utility of his life has been successful. Thus, from the relative point of view, disciples can help the Acarya. But from the absolute

stand-point, Krsna's will is everything, and the nitya-siddha or eternally perfect great souls who inwardly know the Lord's intentions cannot be disturbed by any danger in any respect, but outwardly such an appearance may be manifest in their dealings.

By mutual understanding and discussion, a nectar arises to nourish the devotees

mac-citta mad-gata-prana, bodhayantah parasparam
kathayantas ca mam nityam, tusyanti ca ramanti ca
(Bg. 10.9)

Mac-citta: "Their attention is in Me"; *mad-gata-prana*: "Their energy is also spent for my cause"; *bodha-yantah parasparam*: "They mutually assist one another." This reminds us of the 'Napoleonic chair.' Once, when stranded in a marsh, Napoleon arranged that each man sit on the lap of another, in a circular formation; each automatically protected the other from the otherwise fatal cold and they could all remain awake to pass the whole night of intolerable cold. Otherwise his army would have perished So, by mutual help, one devotee is asking questions, another is answering, and they are both getting engagement. The questioner is giving some energy and the answerer is also energizing. Bodhayantah parasparam: those of equal standing exchange their thoughts about Krsna - *kathayantas ca mam nityam* - and thereby their blissfulness is generated. By mutual understanding and discussion, a kind of nectar arises that nourishes the devotees. "One is asking something about Me and another is answering, and thereby that discussion creates a flow of nectar that nourishes both parties." *Tusyanti ca ramanti ca*: "Satisfaction is generated from that mutual understanding, and it develops up to ramanti ca, up to the quality of the absolute reciprocation, the 'wholesale transaction.' It rises up to that standard, ramanti ca, and again I give them a further installment, an illumination of new light (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*), and they take a new course and are promoted into the 'suicide squad,' that squadron which is eligible for every type of service."

To be competent for any type of sacrifice or service

That particular type of 'soldier' is competent to fight on the land, in the water, in the sky or in any circumstances, and he is prepared for any form of fighting, any form of service. "I direct them to that section."

Yena mam upayanti te (Bg. 10.10). Unconditional service: they are ready for any service demanded of them. They are ready to sacrifice their lives for any form of service, and that peculiar group is in Vrndavana. I mentioned to Sripada A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maha-raja that in Gita, after *ramanti* (10.9) comes *buddhi-yoga and then upayanti* (10.10); according to me, the meaning is that ramanti or divine service in madhura-rasa progresses through buddhi-yoga or yoga-maya, up to upayanti, or the highest plane of service in Vrndavana. Sripada Swami Maharaja responded, "What more could it mean than this!"

Hence, upayanti means kama-rupa. In his Bhakti--rasamrta-sindhu, Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned sambandha-rupa and kama-rupa, the two types of Ragatmika-bhakti, or devotion rendered by the Eternal Asso-ciates of the Lord, headed by the residents of Vraja. In sambandha-rupa the Lord's Associates cooperate according to their fixed relative positions of dasya, sakhya,

vatsalya or madhura, whereas in kama-rupa they come forward to serve any necessity that is demanded of them. They are ready to serve any and every desire of the Absolute.
They are like that group of soldiers who have been trained to do any service in the war without being limited to fighting only in a particular division such as the army, navy or air force. They are prepared for all sorts of service, anywhere. Such is the kama-rupa group. This is upayanti te; they are awarded the instruction (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*) by which they earn such capacity in the service of the Supreme. Krsna is ready to cooperate with the servitors in any position. In Mathura, He gave even Sairindhri, Kubja, the chance to render higher service. Krsna is prepared for anything, and so the other side, His servi-tors, must also be prepared in that way. The high conception of kama-rupa is very, very abstruse. It is most difficult for ordinary mortals to comprehend.

tesam evanukampartham, aham ajnana-jam tamah
nasayamy atma-bhava-stho, jnana-dipena bhasvata
(Bg. 10.11)

"I am so indebted to those devotees that whenever they feel the pain of My separation, I cannot tolerate it. I immediately run to cooperate with them in accepting My service. Such is the intensity of the demand I feel from them."

Try to keep company with the successful candidates

In an examination hall, many of us may sit for the examination, yet many are unsuccessful and fall back. But we are not to dwell on them. Rather, we shall try to keep company with the successful candidates. They should be the focus of our attention, and with their help we shall progress. Progress means selection and elimination, and there is no end of making progress. We must take courage to that extent.
Everywhere and in whatever direction we may go, we shall find both successful and unsuccessful candi-dates. We shall try to avoid the unsuccessful. Some may be brilliant in the primary classes, but in pro-gressing further, we find that they are proving dull and cannot pass the test. And there may be many who were not very successful in the primary classes but flourish in higher education. Thus, we should not be discouraged and disappointed on hearing that so many once respected stalwarts are falling away. We should try to feel the actual soil. We need a sincere acquaintance with the soil on which we are moving. It is unintelligible to the fullest extent, but we must spare some energy to cultivate a deeper feeling for where we are, what we want, and where we are going. We must have a deeper feeling for the plane of our objective and achievement. We must not allow ourselves to be captured by the outer charm of things, but we should try to feel and trace the reality as our friend.

Liberation belittled

klesa-ghni subhada moksa-, laghuta-krt sudurllabha
sandrananda-visesatma, sri-krsnakarsini ca sa
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva 1.17)

"Uttama-bhakti, the purest devotion, is the vanquisher of all sin and ignorance, and the bestower of all auspiciousness; liberation is belittled in the presence of such devotion, which is very rarely attained, the embodiment of the deepest ecstasy, and the attractor of Sri Krsna Himself."

Even if we achieve liberation from all the undesirable forces around us, pure devotion undermines this position of liberation (*moksa-laghuta-krt*). We may be a liberated soul, free from the reactions and apprehension of the future, but association with the positive engagement, bhakti, is much more difficult to attain (sudurllabha). To obtain a 'passport' is not the same as securing a 'visa.' One may have a passport, but in order to secure a visa it will have to be necessary to undergo more trouble. In other words, we may be released by the reactionary plane, yet we may not have entrance into the higher plane. To have entrance there is far beyond this liberation. The qualification to eagerly aspire to give oneself wholly for the other plane of life is hardly to be found in anyone. Such a person has no motive to acquire anything for the plane in which he had previously been living for so long.
Furthermore, if he is appointed to be a preacher, an agent to do relief work here, he will execute that duty solely under the appointment of, and in the interest of, that higher plane, without any attachment that "I shall bring some good to the people." He will think, "I must put myself wholly at the disposal of the higher plane, and I shall not be eager to become an acarya, a spiritual master. Otherwise, there is the danger of committing namaparadha, offense against the Lord's name."

Asraddadhane vimukhe 'py asrnvati, yas copadesa siva-namaparadhah. It is an offense to give the holy name to the faithless. It betrays the motivation to gain a 'position' in the higher sphere. This is a type of mundane attachment, a spiritual tradery, as is the habit of caste 'Goswamins' and other spurious lines. Rather, the healthy attitude should be, "If I am appointed from above, then I shall serve as appointed, and that too, only for the interest of those who have appointed me. I am entering that rank solely for the interest of that higher land." That should be the pure and perfect approach.

So, with a passport alone we cannot hope to enter easily into that higher plane which is sudurllabha, very rarely attained. But if we can enter, we shall feel *sandrananda visesatma*, "Yes, the very plane itself is most happy and full of independent spirit. I desired to secure a 'visa' to enter this country, and now I find that it really is as promised. I directly perceive that I am breathing in a far higher, sweeter atmosphere - a homely atmosphere that far excels anything of my previous soil." And finally, *sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*: Krsna Himself, Reality the Beautiful, who attracts the hearts of all - even He is attracted by the dedication of his surrendered servitor. Neither power nor knowledge have any play in this domain, but the Sweet Absolute is captured by the love of His devotee.

Chapter Four

The Honest Inquirer

We should note the difference between a servant and a trader. Many approach with some trading purpose, but the character of the real devotee should be that of a servant. Sri Prahlada Maharaja has mentioned that one who associates with the sadhus, wanting something in return for his personal interest, is making 'trade' with the sadhus. He thinks, "How much can I gain, and how much shall I have to give?" But a pure devotee should not have any such separate interest. Rather, he should try to merge within the interest of the Lord. In whatever position he is, it does not matter - whether he is a brahmacari, a sannyasi, a grhastha, a vanaprastha or any other position - he must be willing to merge (*visate tad anantaram*).

He will not like to keep any separate account. His sole objective will be to enter into the family of the Godhead. This is the very basis of pure devotion. *Tato mam tattvato jnatva, visate tad anantaram* (Bg. 18.55). We want to surrender, to be one of common interest with the Lord, and not to approach, ask some questions, pocket the answers, and then make trade with them elsewhere in any way. Once, when I was being asked many questions, I replied, "This is not an inquiry office. The inquisitive want to satisfy their idle curiosity; or, they want to be masters of many keys - that they will be able to give solutions to everyone's problems, and attain some status. They have many motives but they cannot understand the real necessity.

My sole inquiry is, 'How can I be utilized here?'

We require specific articles to execute worship, such as incense, flowers, lamp, etc. Similarly, if we wish to realize the supersubjective plane, there are three specific necessities: pranipata, pariprasna, and seva. Without these three ingredients, our search will be imitative, unsubstantial and farcical.

Pranipata means 'to fall flat near the feet of the worshipable': "I have come to the end of all enterprise with my previous plane of life; I could find nothing there to fulfill my life's objectives. Finally, after 'completing my errands,' I have come here." This is the practical symptom of pranipata.

Pariprasna means 'sincere inquiry.' Honest and sincere inquiry is allowed. The spirit of such inquiry is, "I want to know how I can be utilized in any way. All the charm for living elsewhere is over. My sole inquiry is 'How can I be utilized here?' "

And seva, service, is the all-important factor. "I have come to serve and to be utilized for the cause of the subject about which I have inquired. I have not come to take anything from here. I have come only to serve, with no other motive."

tad vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet
samit panih srotriyam brahma-nistham
(Mundaka Upanisad, 1.2.12)

Abhigacchet means samyak-gacchet - 'not with a return ticket.' Abhi- means samyak, 'fully.' I have completely lost my charm for the previous life; I have come to surrender to *srotriyam brahma-nistham*, one who can teach me, being already in a position in the divinity and posses-

sing both theoretical and practical knowledge about the objective. Without this process, everything will be futile.

tasmad gurum prapadyeta, jijnasuh sreyah uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam, brahmany upasamasrayam
(Bha: 11.3.21).

Tasmat means 'consequently' - because the candidate has lost all charm for the world of his previous experience - he has consequently approached with the sole objective of seeking an honorable place here for his future life. Prapadyeta means prapannam, 'surrender' he will exclusively devote himself for the cause. *Jijnasuh sreyah uttamam*: he has come in search of a higher life. "The lower lives are over; can I have an elevated life here?" He is therefore surrendering to one who is versed in both aspects of the truth - the reality (pare) as well as the literary description of that reality (*sabde, or sruti-sastre*), which is revealed truth extended from the higher quarter, beyond this world of sensual experience.

In the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Prahlada Maharaja refused to accept any boons offered to him by the Lord. He said, "One who accepts boons in return for his service to You is not Your servant but a merchant" (*na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik*, Bha: 7.10.4). Those who approach Guru and Krsna with their separate interest have come only to make trade. They have come to acquire something to satisfy their own purpose. We must be very cautious to avoid such traits within ourselves. For what have I come? There may be many motives.

Trading with Bhagavatam is a grave offense, aparadha

After a famous renowned Goswamin who was well-versed in Srimad-Bhagavatam had explained the Bhagavatam in a public gathering, Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, who was present during the lecture, later ordered his servant, "Purify this place with water and cow-dung!"

The servant was wonderstruck. "Why? It is already purified; the recitation of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavata-katha, took place here."

Srila Gaura Kisora Babaji said, "You heard Bhagavatam, but I heard only 'money, money, money.'" In other words, the Goswamin had been very eager to have Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji present at his lecture; the publicity that Srila Babaji was present to hear his explanation of Srimad-Bhagavatam would give the lecturer greater scope to make more money in his trade. He came to read Srimad-Bhagavatam only for that purpose, and not to satisfy Bhagavatam or Krsna. He came for his own business; not for the purpose of Bhagavatam. Trading with Bhagavatam is an offense, aparadha, against the Bhagavatam, most detrimental to pure devotion. One's attitude in devotion is all-important. Srila Sridhara Swami, the renowned commentator of Srimad-Bhagavatam, has stated, *sa carpitaiva sati yadi kriyeta, na tu krta sati pascad arpyeta*: "Devotional services must be first offered to the Lord, then performed; not performed and offered afterwards."

We should be already committed when we come to serve, and not that we shall collect capital and later try to utilize it in the service of the Lord The commitment is to Him, to Krsna. I have come to know about Him for Him, not for me or anyone else. Then, why is there a preaching

department for others' benefit? That department exists only because of the instruction from above. Only if I receive an impression from that higher quarter, "Go and preach," shall I do so, and only then will my preaching be service, and never if it is done for the name and fame that "I am a good preacher doing good work, etc." I must have engagement from the higher office, and only on their behalf I shall preach; then it will be genuine preaching. Otherwise, it will be trading. *Na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik*: Prahlada Maharaja has warned us against this trading mentality in the name of spiritual truth.

Devotion is a separate and distinct plane where we live only for the center; we aspire to live and move only as an agent of the center, never disconnected from the center - this is Krsna consciousness. Reality is for itself, and we must strictly abide by this rule. He is for Himself, everything is for Him - and I am for Him. And whatever I do must also be for Him. We must strictly adhere to this conception, and always examine whether what we are doing is for Him or for any other part, however important we may think it to be.

The audacious reject the Vaisnava's guidance

And what is the guarantee? The guarantee is Vaisnava and sastra. One should not be so audacious to think that he can conceive the whole thing; one should do everything with the approval of a Vaisnava (vaisnavera anugatya). In the beginning, when I joined Gaudiya Math, my God-brother Professor Sanyal remarked one day, "If we read Bhagavatam on our own accord, we may perhaps acquire some knowledge, etc., but not bhakti, devotion. But if a Vaisnava orders us to read, our reading will be in devotion." Even reading of the scriptures is not devo-tion unless done on the order of the Vaisnava; independent reading is only knowledge-seeking. By following the Vaisnava, our bond with the Lord is guaranteed. *Sadhu-sange krsna-nama*: in the company of the devotees, chanting the name or whatever service we render is guaranteed to reach Him. And what is the guarantee of that? The reply will be, "His agent is saying so, and I am therefore engaged. I am not my master - I am his servant." Such consciousness must be genuine, as far as possible; success depends on this principle.

Reality is for itself. This truth, however hard it: may seem, must be accepted. 'Die to live,' and 'Reality is by itself and for itself - these sayings of Hegel can be very nicely employed by the Vaisnava school.

First surrender: then serve

aham hi sarva-yajnanam, bhokta ca prabhur eva ca
(Bg. 9.24)

In Sri Gita, we find that 'Reality is by itself and for itself: I am the Lord and Enjoyer of all sacrifices." Thus, Sri Sridhara Swamipada has remarked, "First surrender, then serve." Otherwise you will try to acquire something, pocket it, and fly away. No. Sign the contract for everything that is given to you, then do the needful service without relying on yourself.

Is such a life desirable? We have to think it out: there is so much risk - 'Die to live.' Must we first die in order to live in the future? Are we prepared to take such a risk? Are we sufficiently dis-

gusted with the present environment that we can risk so much for some bright future? "I shall jump!" Are we disgusted enough to take such a step?
If I am sincere to myself, and if I have a glimpse of the bright future, then only can I take such a risk. Otherwise no one would be so foolish to take such a risk and jump, giving up the present for the uncertain future. To feel the courage to jump, one must have caught a glimpse of even the tiniest ray of such a bright existence.

Sukrti, devotional merit, and sraddha, good faith, are required. If only a point of noble faith has arisen in one's heart, he may take such a bold step and he must jump; otherwise it is impossible. First sraddha, then sadhu-sanga and bhajana-kriya: with faith, when one has the association of the devotees, the practices of devotional service follow. With faith, one can embrace the process of realization. *Sakala chadiya bhai, sraddhadevira guna gai*: give up everything and with your utmost energy praise the nobility of faith, the ray for a new and noble life.

Even great scholars and stalwarts of the religious world cannot comprehend the quality of the life of surrender to Krsna (*na vai vidur rsayo napi devah*, Bha: 6.3.19); what, then, can common humans comprehend? Those remaining outside may be trying, but they have not yet come to the soil.

If we do everything for Him, everything will be very beautifully done

When prospecting for oil or minerals, one may see many outer symptoms indicating the presence of those elements within the earth below, but only after pen-etrating deeper can one confirm his find. Despite many outer symptoms without substance, only when the search has reached to a certain stage can one know, "Yes, we have struck oil, or iron, or gold." So, Sri Caitanyadeva said, *eho haya, age kaha ara*: "The divine life you are searching for is; now go further."

In this way, with good faith, sraddha, one can thus progress. Faith must be of this nature: if we supply food to the stomach, naturally the whole body will be nourished; we shall not try to nourish a particular part by a local injection. If we supply water to the root, the whole tree will be fed. Similarly, by faith we can realize that if we do everything for Him, the center of Beauty Personified, everything will be very beautifully done. With all your might contribute your quota, however small, and from that point your efforts will be distributed beautifully. And this is the highest harmony. The highest life for every part is of the nature of harmony with the whole.

If you have a good cook, why try to cook separately yourself; If you simply assist him according to his directions, your ingredients cooked by his hands will be tasteful to all. So engage yourself with that principle. Whatever might you have, however small, place it at the disposal of the highest beauty, love divine, and it will be distributed; and you will also be inundated with the highest quality and degree of joy and fulfillment Such a life of devotion has been recommended as the key to our life. Prahlada Maharaja, who is a suddha-bhakta, a pure devotee, of the primary stage, santa-rasa, has warned us of the contamination of the 'trading temperament'; it is a great danger in our approach to pure devotion (*na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik*). So we must scrutinise ourselves and abandon this trading temperament. At its root is pratistha - the quest for self-establishment, name and fame. Genuine devotion is devoid of such a temperament.

Chapter Five

Unconditional Service

Try to adjust yourself through sound only, the subtlemost element of this plane. Through sound, go on cultivating spiritual life; and that too must be ap-proached with a serving attitude, otherwise it will be futile. We are recommended to approach divinity through the most subtle element of this gross world. Although it is apparently nothing to us at present, this divinity is actually everything.

So, accept the subtlemost thing. But if the very life is absent, our search will be futile. Learn to give yourself, learn to 'die,' to embrace so-called death at every second. Even in this world we find the 'do-or-die' attitude in ambitious politicians, social workers, etc. In every duty and at every step they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause. If one embraces that do-or-die principle of life, he is sure to progress very intensely and become a great success.

Here also, when approaching the high spiritual life, you must invite death at every step. Give yourself with the most intense desire: do or die. At every point, keep your life as your guarantee: "I shall succeed or I shall die." Approach the sound, giving yourself with this spirit. No giving - no getting. If you can desire to give with such an intensified nature, you will be transformed into a bonafide candidate for the higher world.

Service means self-giving, self-dedication, and this should be our attitude to approach the plane. In that way, all the coatings of ego will vanish one by one, and the genuine self will come from within and select its own soil: "This is my home." So many coverings are deviating us in different directions, taking us far, far away from our svarupa, our real noble self - a servant in the highest plane of the whole organism. The Beautiful is playing, dancing in His own sweetness and affection, and we can reach Him, following such a course of 'do or-die' at every moment.

Through self-giving I can acquire my fortune, and not as a master sitting in my chair gathering information from different quarters to utilize for my selfish plans. *Adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sanga 'tha bhajana-kriya* (Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 4.15): to progress with faith, keeping the association of devotees and dedicating one's activities to the Lord, means this - you must go forward in your life with the spirit that you are willing to give away this life. 'Do-or-die' is, of course, not in the physical sense but the internal sense (bhajana-kriya). This is self-giving, ego-giving.

Mean desires won't be able to touch you

Tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat: if you can adopt this, the undesirable things within you will disappear very easily and swiftly. *Tato nistha*: then you will find a continuous connection with such a principle in your life. That principle will always act continuously, and other fleeting, mean desires won't be able to approach or touch you. Next, you will find ruci, a real taste for divinity. Otherwise, before that continuous stage, whatever taste we may think we have is only treachery and not real taste. Nistha means nairantarya: when we are established in twenty-four hours a day continuous connection with that charming substance, a real taste will arise, and we can rely on that taste. Any taste that we may find in any other position is unreliable. Twenty-four hours a day

connection with divinity eliminating all other charms of this world is necessary. Then, the ruci, the conscious taste that arises in us, is a reliable guide.

After that, asakti, natural affinity, arises, and then the symptoms of bhava, the 'bud' stage of the 'flower' of prema, divine love, makes its appearance. This is the way of our progress. But if there is any imitation, only offenses will be created. Those offenses will be recorded in that circle of the examiners of the upper quarter, and they will give a stamp of disqualification that we are criminal and unfit. This will go against us and hamper our future progress. Thus, we must be very careful not to commit offense, aparadha. It is better to be a newcomer with a new introduction than to have a criminal record, for that will go against us. We must be very, very careful in our quest for the highest objective of our eternal life. This caution has been especially given by our Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura, and he attracted us to the line of exclusive devotion.

The very life of the practice is all important - this is self-dedication

Sevonmukhe, serving attitude was foremost. Our Guru Maharaja did not allow us to read much, even of the lower types of scriptures dealing with general sadhana or practices, not to speak of the higher books. Rather, we were expected to actually follow those practices by hearing from the proper source and practicing accordingly whatever was instructed from there. Serving - learn to give yourself properly. There are different methods of service: sravana, hearing; kirtana, chanting; smarana, remembering; vandana, praying, etc. Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned sixty-four kinds of devotional practices, and it has also been further mentioned that there are one thousand types of devotional practices. But practices are not very important; the very life of the practice is all-important, for this is self-dedication. Thus we should be very particular to learn that dedication is work under a Vaisnava.

Try to get practical training, working under a proper agent; that will help you most to learn and practice true dedication. Guidance must come -from above. It may be very rare, but it is most valuable. We must selflessly surrender to whatever directive descends from above. "I won't serve my whims or the whims of men of my level, but whatever comes from the plane above, I shall obey very eagerly." This is the key, and this is service.

Sevonmukhata, serving attitude, means what? One day, during the latter days of his presence in the world, our Guru Maharaja Srila Prabhupada said to a certain sannyasi who had led a full twenty years of life in the mission, "You did not see me - you could not see who I am. Like a zamindar you have kept some householder servitors under you, and from them you periodically give a donation to me. You have become like a broker, but you should be wholesale mine - my agent. You are not doing that. You are dependent on those householders while maintaining some connection with me. This is not necessary. You are not a member of this world. You are mine alone. Whatever I say, you should do. You should not sell yourself to anything or any proposal of this world. You are to be wholesale my servant." Thus, this necessary attitude is rarely to be found. We should surrender to whatever flows from the higher plane and thereby substantiate its reality.

viracaya mayi dandam dinabandho dayam va
gatir iha na bhavattah kacid anya mamasti

nipatatu sata-kotir nirbharam va navambhas
tad api kila payodah stuyate catakena

The bird known as Cataka always looks above for rainwater, but it will never take any water from the ground even if there is an abundance there. He waits only for whatever water will come from above. Sufficient rain may come, or thunder may come, yet he will not take even a single drop from the earth. Our attitude should be like that. We must follow whatever instruction and direction comes from above, and never try to fulfill any plan from the mundane world. "The Director, the Master, the Lord above - I am connected with Him." This sort of practice is conducive.

We may chant the name, hear the musical kirtana, etc., but the very life will be present only as much as our activity is on the order descending from the plane above, and as much as that order is earnestly being carried out by us. In that way, we may be taken above. We may be promoted to the higher layer by preparing ourselves only to carry out the order from above, without question. If we are certain that the order is coming from the higher layer, we should surrender without question. By living at the disposal of the higher, we learn selfless service of the higher, which is not of any mundane source. This is our necessity: Vaisnava-seva and Guru-seva - service to the Vaisnava and Guru. By Guru-bhakti alone - devotion to the service of Sri Gurudeva - in one stroke, all desirable pursuits will be accomplished (*etat sarvam gurau bhaktya, puruso hy anjasa jayet*, Bha: 7.15.25). There are also many symptoms by which to recognise the genuine Guru, and by obeying the directions of the higher, we can make progress towards the higher; we may hope to be selected by the higher and be taken up to that layer if we are considered sufficiently qualified. This attitude will be the main tenure of our lives if we want to go to the high, superconscious region.

If we apply reason, we shall be nowhere

In the Vedanta-sutra, it is mentioned that the process to reach that region is by revealed truth and not by reason (*tarka-pratisthanat*). If we apply reason, we shall be nowhere. Among expert arguers, there may always be one more expert - in this way, on and on, no end. Thus, tarka, reason and argument, is inconclusive (*apratistha*). Intellectualism has no standing here, because super-consciousness is beyond our jurisdiction. It cannot be an object of our intellect. By serving, by honoring, by self-giving, by heart-giving, and never otherwise, can we invite that high guest. It is not possible to capture and encage Him by intrigue and conspiracy. Such an attempt will betray Satan in another color.

Not only self-abnegation, but self-surrender is necessary to approach God. Deep self-surrender will take us into connection with the higher, noble substance, and it must be cultivated by all means. And service is not service to maya. I must be very careful to perceive that I am not merely serving maya, who has appeared in a charming or 'godly' form. In our present position we must be extremely cautious regarding who and what we are serving. The main wave will be jnane prayasam uda-pasya (Bha: 10.14.3): hatefully discard (uda-pa-asya) all proposals that your intellect may offer you. Whatever the intellect can judge and accept or reject must necessarily be of a lower type. So, you are to summarily reject that, and understand that you must bow down your head (*namanta eva*).

Try to connect with that section where you can never be master

The beginning of your interest is to bow down your head, and your heart will be captured automatically. Try to connect with that section where you will always be with folded palms, and where you can never be master. Such abnegation and courage of self-giving is necessary if you want to live in the higher plane. Otherwise, you may reign in hell. According to Satan's word, "it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." But just the opposite is necessary.

Even tears and crying have no value if the inner tendency of self-giving is absent. Seva, service, mean self-giving, and that is the standard principle in the life of a devotee. This self-giving must really be to the higher sphere and not just haphazardly around us, for that is another way to b captured by hateful things.

Jnana, knowledge, is generally regarded as being very pure. By the majority of people, jnana is considered to be very innocent because it has no relationship with gross, material things. It is always admitted that to handle the gross material energy is very unwholesome (*sasvad abhadram*); and knowledge is considered by the higher personalities to be very pure, very innocent and spotless (*jnanam alam niranjanam*). But if it is not con-nected with Krsna, such knowledge must be hatefully rejected.

naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam
(Bha 1.5.12)

Here, in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, it is said that knowledge is widely considered to be spotless, pure and innocent, but if it is not connected with the positive absolute good, then it is your enemy. A qualified candidate will consider things in this way. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*: Surrender is so pure, that any connection with knowledge, which is considered to be very innocent and pure - even that must be hatefully rejected. Such a degree of surrender is necessary for the higher association of genuine devotion.

Both the charm of material acquisition, and the charm of the mastery of knowing everything, are to be rejected (*jnana-karmady-anavrtam*). It is not possible for you to know anything about the infinite, either in magnitude or quality. The infinite is a flow of auto-cracy, so what can you know of it? Therefore, knowledge means more than storing so many relative or false incidents, and 'selling' that information to the world in order to fulfill some other function such as personal name and fame. Hatefully give this up and engage in unqualified and unconditional service. That is noble, and that will take you up to the nobler region.

Thus, karma and jnana - handling matter and handling knowledge - both are discouraged. Knowledge wont be allowed to enter that 'market' where the absolute will and autocracy reign. No rule and regulation can work there. False gathering and false store have got no standing there.

Only surrender, and we will have that high relationship. Serving attitude is our friend. We are a unit of serving attitude, and service means to surrender to the higher. And the higher means the plane uncontaminated with material and intellectual acquisition. We must serve such a higher plane.

Chapter Six

The Highest Conception of Conduct

One day, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was chanting the Lord's names and wandering in the sky, at his sweet will. Suddenly he found that he was just near Yamalaya where Yama, the lord of death, holds court for judging the sinners of this world. He also found there Brahma, Narada, Siva, and others, discussing with Yamaraja the meaning of two slokas spoken by Sri Krsna in Bhagavad-gita (9.30,31); but they could not solve the problem of discerning the proper meaning of the slokas.

api cet suduracaro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah, samyag vyavasito hi sah

"Externally, a person may be seen to commit many sins, but if he is exclusively given to My devotion, he should be considered most pure - a saint. Whatever he does, he does cent-per-cent rightly."

ksipram bhavati dharmatma, sasvac chantim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi, na me bhaktah pranasyati

"Very soon, he will become religious in his behavior, and he will be seen to acquire real peace in his life. O son of Kunti, confidently declare to the public that my devotee never meets ruination."

The exclusive devotee is transcendental to piety and sinfulness

But one who is engaged in the Lord's exclusive devotion, ananya-bhajana, has been defined by the Lord in His own words, *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*: "My exclusive devotee is he who gives up all phases of duties (sarva-dharman) and surrenders to My feet, accepting only his duty to Me." How, then, having already surpassed all phases of duties and surrendered to the Lord, can that exclusive devotee (ananya-bhak) further be seen to become a 'dutiful' or an externally 'pious man' (*ksipram bhavati dharmatma*)? This is an anomaly.

Yamaraja, Brahma, Narada, etc., discussed this point, but could not arrive at any solution. How can one become "righteous in the near future" when he has already abandoned all kinds of duties, either righteous or unrighteous, in order to exclusively surrender to the feet of the Supreme Lord? Finding no solution, they sent for Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura who, they noticed, was moving in the sky and taking the name of the Lord: "He is a pure devotee - and not an ordinary devotee - he has deep knowledge of the scriptures, so let him come and explain these verses of Bhagavad-gita."

And so, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was invited, and he went there. He gave the meaning. Api cet sudura-caro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak - despite his outer prac-tices, the exclusive devotee (ananya-bhak) is to be accepted (mantavyah) as a cent-per-cent saint (sadhu). Therefore, the conclusion is that he who can realize this, he who declares that an exclusive devotee of Krsna, regardless of his outer practices, is cent-per-cent saintly - he will soon become dharmatma, vir-

tuous and religious. His statement and conclusion is cent-per-cent correct, and his conduct will soon become very pure and he, too, will have the chance of accepting the path towards eternal truth.

Whether or not we obey provincial laws, we must obey His Absolute law

"So Arjuna, you take advantage of this and boldly declare to the public that My devotee who gives himself wholly unto Me can never come to ruination. Even if he may be seen to be outwardly doing something wrong - he will be saved. His successful life is assured. By this declaration, you will get the benefit of becoming righteous and have the chance of attaining eternal spiritual peace. Whoever can understand this and has the courage to declare that My exclusive devotee is never subject to ruination - he, in turn, gets his chance to come to this path of exclusive devotion, and he will attain eternal peace."

He will attain everything because he has the proper appreciation for exclusive devotion. Everything is for the Lord, and not for any other part. In the Absolute, everything is 'for itself.' 'The Absolute is for itself.' Whether we obey or disobey the laws of provincial or separate interest, we must without fail obey the rule that everything is for Him. This is the main rule, and all others are subsidiary. We may or may not carry on our duties, but we must carry on our duty towards the center; this is the all-important factor in every case. Thus, one who can appreciate this and boldly assert it to the public must have substantial appreciation for this conception, and he is sure to survive and improve his future condition very soon. "He will attain the path of eternal peace, and that is the service of Myself, Krsna." This is the underlying meaning.

The highest quality in every part of the whole is that everyone must be dedicated towards the center, even crossing his dutifulness in respect to any other environmental position. And one who can feel, appreciate, and assert this - he will also soon achieve such a position. His inner heart can appreciate, and that is something of a realization on that path; it will very soon take effect, and the public will see, "Oh, he is also entering this path of ananya-bhajana, the exclusive adherence to the call of the Absolute Center, and that is all-in-all."

Consider him free from fault

"*Dharma* means morals, duties, including duties to father, mother, country, society, humanity; etc. But if one neglects all these and keeps a straight relationship towards Me, he will be considered free of any fault. He is in the line of *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja.* He is doing right, and one who can simply appreciate this will also very soon be converted to the same class." This is the whole purport.

In the standard or most general interpretation, the beginner in devotional service may have so many bad tendencies in his behavior, but when he matures these must disappear. Nonetheless, undesirable behavior may sometimes be seen to persist, at least externally.

By chewing his poison, poison will come to me

The more we are particular about the conduct of others, the more we lose our own time and energy. Instead of benefiting us, such a practice is reactionary. If I try to find fault with anyone, especially a devotee, the fault will come back to me. By chewing the poison in his body, that

poison will come to me. Avoid such association. Try to find the good in others - that will help you.

There was a system in our Math at the time of our Guru Maharaja: he ordered one devotee to praise another - especially one that the devotee disliked. Thus, the devotee would be forced to find the goodness in the other devotee who he didn't particularly like, and thereby be benefited. Eliminating what was bad in his conception of the other person, he was to search for what good he could find, and thereby be benefited.

Dare not criticize those under charge of Krsna

There need be no culture with any bad thing, anywhere, especially in the devotees. Krsna has taken charge of His surrendered souls (ananya-bhak). Thus, whatever good or bad may be present in them is His responsibility. Any badness or evil in a devotee may disappear at any time by His will, otherwise Krsna may have that tendency continue in order to serve some purpose of His. We must have this vision. We must not dare to criticize those who are directly under the charge of Krsna, or we shall accrue great difficulty. We should try to find the good in them, for that will help us a great deal. This is not a theoretical matter, but a most practical consideration.

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the example that the sacred Ganges water may externally appear to be filthy, but that outward filthiness of mud, bubbles and foam cannot change the purifying capacity of the Ganges water; similarly, the devotee himself, the pure soul or atma, is the purifying agent - the purest and most normal factor in the world. Whatever may be externally seen in his character is like the mud, bubbles and foam that is found in the Ganges water. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water is separate, and cannot be disturbed by any foam or dirt mixed with the water. The spiritual capacity does not depend in any way on the apparent material capacity. A Vaisnava may sometimes be seen to be a little greedy, a little angry; or physically he may be blind or deaf or lame - but the saintly character of the Vaisnava is independent of the mental or physical characteristics.

During Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's tour of South India, there was the case of Vasudeva-vipra, at Kurmaksetra. He was a leper, but at the same time he was a great devotee. His physical behavior was also uniquely exemplary: if any worms fell from his open sores to the ground, he would pick them up and replace them in the sores so the worms would not die. He was a thorough devotee. Mahaprabhu embraced him, and by the touch of His embrace, the leprosy disappeared.

Also, Srila Sanatana Goswami contracted sores all over his body due to the contact of bad water in the jungle, when he was returning from Vrndavana to Puri. Mahaprabhu used to welcome him by embracing him, but Sanatana would try to withdraw. He objected, "Don't touch me! This is the body of a sinful man." The sores were oozing and emitting a bad odor, but Mahaprabhu embraced him forcibly. Sanatana had decided, "I shall either leave this place or I shall invite death by falling under the wheel of the cart of Lord Jagannatha." But as the Lord in the heart of all, Mahaprabhu knew Sanatana's mind. He chastised him, and embraced him, forcibly. All the sores disappeared, and Sanatana's body immediately became like gold.

Exclusive devotion to Krsna is the only necessity

Mahaprabhu said, "Sanatana, you are a Vaisnava. Your body is not defective. *Aprakrta- deha tomara 'prakrta' kabhu naya*. Krsna is testing Me. I am a sannyasi, and He is examining whether there is any partiality in My dealings with a Vaisnava simply because of his externally having so many sores. He is examining whether I will shrink from the association of such a Vaisnava and cast him aside. But your body is already pure, and only for the purpose of testing the public, Krsna has created this; and if I cannot see this, I will have failed His test and will have been deceived by Krsna. It is a mere show, it is nothing; your body is pure because you are a Vaisnava, a devotee of Krsna. This impurity is only an appearance in order to serve Krsna's divine purpose. Wherever there is Vaisnavata, true saintly devotedness, there can never be any contamination. Only to test my devotion has Krsna sent you to Me in this condition." So Mahaprabhu embraced him and demonstrated that he was absolutely pure.

Whether externally pure or impure, the whole principle is that our exclusive devotion for Krsna is the only necessity. In the ordinary sense, the Gopis are also sinners. They crossed the laws of society and the sastras, so they are 'sinners.' But they hold the highest position of purity by their exclusive devotedness to Krsna and no other. They cannot help but to serve Krsna cent-per-cent, even at the risk of crossing the entire code of morality. They are considered to be the highest devotional ideal.

But that sort of devotion is not so cheap that everyone will go on with their activities in this world, taking advantage of such ideals. That won't do. The real measure of devotion must be there, not that anyone may do anything passing in the name of pure devotion, like the prakrta-sahajiyas. That can't be allowed.

Chapter Seven

The Grand Victory of Love

Devotion is above all. Saranagati, surrender, is the highest property of everyone. Surrender to Him, and He may graciously make His name known to us, and we will be able to know Him.

In the Upanisads, it is said, yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyah: whoever He chooses to make Himself known to can know Him. Otherwise, no one can know Him against His will. He has reserved all the right of not being exposed to the senses of anyone and everyone. He is so high, He can do that. If He does not wish to make Himself known, no one can know Him - whenever He wishes to make Himself known to someone, they can know Him. This is His position.

On the order of his Gurudeva Devarsi Narada, the scripture Srimad-Bhagavatam was given by Vedavyasa as the conclusion of his teachings. After giving the Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Mahabharata, Bhagavad-gita, etc., the last gift of Vedavyasa in the world of scriptures was Srimad-Bhagavatam. And the message of the Bhagavatam is that beauty is above all - not knowledge or justice. Mercy is above justice. Affection, love, beauty, charm, harmony - these are above all, and this absolute conception of the ultimate reality is in the Krsna conception.

Hanker for neither power nor knowledge but hanker after the service of the Beautiful

Beauty is above knowledge and power. Knowledge is above power, and above knowledge is beauty, charm, love. That is the supreme. Srimad-Bhagavatam has declared, krsnas tu bhagavan svayam: the Krsna conception of Godhead is the most original conception of the Absolute. This is the prime declaration of the Bhagavatam: the Lord, as Beauty, is above all. And below Him is awe, reverence, power, etc.

And Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanyadeva pointed out, "Go to the beautiful - Reality the Beautiful - He is your highest attainment. Hanker neither for power nor knowledge, but hanker for service of the Beautiful, and thereby, you will be taken in and given entrance into the land of the Beautiful." This is the highest realization. Don't waste your energy by engaging yourself in any other pursuits, but go straight - *jnana-sunya-bhakti*. By the help of sadhu-sanga, take the name of the Lord and try to march straight onwards to the Krsna conception of Godhead. Krsna consciousness is our highest achievement, and this is given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam.
Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended, "Don't waste your energy for anything else. Utilize your energy for the Krsna conception of Godhead."

So we try to make our progress in this line, and at the same time we also ask our friends to try to embrace this life. The fulfillment of life for every particle of existence of this world can be found here.
March towards universal good. Wherever and whoever you are, it does not matter. Take your course towards Krsna consciousness. This is the highest fulfillment of the life for everyone. You are only to turn your face towards Him and march, and the Sweet Absolute, Sri Krsna, will welcome you. This is the campaign of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Srila Rupa Goswami described Krsna in a scientific way: *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*. Our hearts are hankering for satisfaction and happiness of different types but He is the emporium of all such rasas, flavors of ecstasy. All types of rasas are in Krsna and He is the personification of them all, so everyone can find his corresponding place in Him alone, and nowhere else. He is Krsna - *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*. All our necessary satisfaction is personified in Him. So only He can say, "Give up everything and come to Me, and you won't have to repent. You will find your highest satisfaction." No one else has ever said such a thing in any place. Only Krsna has said this, and Mahaprabhu pointed it out. "Go directly that side and don't go any other way, but march straight for the Krsna conception - that is your home."

Chapter Eight

The Brightest Sun

parivadatu jano yatha tathayam
nanu mukharo na vayam vicarayamah
hari-rasa-madira-madatimatta
bhuvi-viluthama-natama nirvisamah

"The gossipers may slander us, but we shall not heed them. Completely intoxicated by drinking the wine of the ecstasy of Sri Hari's service, we shall dance and roll about on the ground, and faint."

There is a class that think they can take intoxication and chant and dance and roll about on the ground, imitating the divine intoxication mentioned in this verse written by Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. They think they can purchase 'divine' ecstasy very cheaply with the help of intoxication, but their whole attempt is deception. Not to mention them, even the yogic attempt is inferior.

yamadibhir yoga-pathaih, kama-lobha-hato muhuh
mukunda-sevaya yadvat, tathadhatma na samyati
(Bha: 1.6.35)

"The agitated mind, repeatedly taken captive by its enemy in the form of depravity rooted in lust and greed, is directly mastered by serving the Supreme Lord, Mukunda. It can never be likewise checked or paci-fied by practicing the eight-fold yogic discipline, which is generally based on sensual and mental repression (yama, niyama, etc.)."

Here, Sri Narada Muni is saying "You yogis think that by the process of controlling the breath you are getting peace of mind and also control over the senses. But it is only for the time being. Even if it continues for lives together, it is an artificial thing. It cannot have any permanent contribution. You think that control of lust and anger is everything, and that you will find a sort of peace within yourself that you are master of lust, anger, and greed, etc. (kama, krodha, lobha, etc.). But you cannot retain that position. That is a lower position, a lower peace, and it cannot be maintained permanently. You will have to fall down. It is temporary (hato muhuh - controlled repeatedly). But *mukunda-sevaya yadvat . . . samyati*: the peace you attain from yoga practice cannot reach to the degree of peace you will find in yourself by serving Mukunda. This yoga is the artificial means of checking the kama, krodha, etc., that disturb the mind and bring quick reactions. By the practice of controlling the breath, the prana-vayu, one can become a 'master' of the senses, but it is temporary.

In the narrative of Ajamila, we also find mention of the atonement of the 'elephant's bath':

kvacin nivarttate 'bhadrat, kvacic carati tat punah
prayascittam atho 'partham, manye kunjara-saucavat
(Bha 6.1.10)

"Sometimes a person refrains from sin, but in time he again commits the same kind of sin. Therefore, I consider atonement (in the line of karma-kanda, or in the calculation of worldly deeds) to be as futile as an elephant's bath. (The elephant is habituated to immedi-ately rolling about in the dust after taking a dip in the river.)"

I have done something sinful, and if I follow that by an opposite practice as atonement (karma-prayas-citta), the sin is absolved. But the next moment I will compulsively commit that sin a-gain. By jnana-prayascitta we may gain a somewhat more permanent abstention from the sinful activity.

tapasa brahmacaryena, samena ca damena ca
tyagena satya-saucabhyam, yamena niyamena va
deha-vag-buddhijam dhira, dharmajnah sraddhayanvitah
ksipanty agham mahad api, venu-gulmam ivanalah
(Bha: 6.1.13,14.)

"Austerity or one-pointed attention, exclusive celibacy, subjugation of the internal and external senses, charity, truthful speech, cleanliness, sensual discipline (yama) headed by nonviolence, mental regulation (niyama) headed by regular utterance or concentration on mantras - by the strength of such practices, faithful liberationists (jnanis) who know the mysteries of religion drive away even the most grievous sins committed in thought, word, or deed, as bamboo clusters are destroyed by fire.“
The landscape may be clear for a whole year, but next year with the coming of the rainy season, many shrubs will inevitably sprout again. But the type of purity we shall attain when coming in connection with the service of Vasudeva, Sri Krsna, is of eternal factor and peculiarly purest nature. We cannot hope to attain this by any other method than our submission to, and acceptance of, the service of Lord Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful.

kecit kevalaya bhaktya, vasudeva-parayanah
agham dhunvanti kartsnyena, niharam iva bhaskarah
(Bha: 6.1.15)

"But most rarely, the devotee who is cent-per-cent absorbed in the service of Lord Vasudeva annihilates all sins at the root by his practice of exclusive devotion which is indifferent to the above mentioned practices of austerity, etc. As the sun completely destroys a mountain of snow, the exclusive devotees absorbed in the service of Vasudeva are also similarly able to totally uproot sin by the strength of their devotion, that is, even without exerting themselves."

Such peace can never be found anywhere else. Our proper understanding and adjustment with the highest center will give us such peace and freedom from anxiety of all types that cannot be achieved by any artificial methods which are devoid of understanding of the highest center.

tapasvino dana-para yasasvino
manasvino mantra-vidah sumangalah
ksemam na vindanti vina yad-arpanam
tasmai subhadra-sravase namo namah
(Bha 2.4.17)

"I offer my repeated obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, who is all-famous as the Supreme Good. Without offering their actions unto Him, neither the liberationists (jnanis) who are dedicated to austerities, nor the charitable worldly workers (karmis), nor the world-famous, nor the performers of Asvamedha sacrifices, nor the sages or yogis, nor persons dedicated to chanting mantras, nor persons of virtuous behavior - none of them can attain any auspiciousness in life."

Here in his inaugurating speech before delivering Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Sukadeva Goswami says to the scholars, "I know that in this assembly there are many scholars, yogis, and tapasvis of different types, but I present my case before you all: tapasvino - there are many penance-making ascetics; dana-para - there are those who are famous for their big donations; yasa-svino - there may be many famous for their writings or their sacrifice; manasvino - there are many great thinkers; mantra-vidah - there are those who are well-versed in the application of the mystic words, and so on. But you must realize that none of them can be successful in life without surrendering to Krsna. Understanding with the highest central truth can give you your peaceful and harmonious life, and no partial attainment can compare with such an acquisition."

Concentration induced by drugs is artificial concentration. All contributions from the mundane cannot but be artificial and of lower nature. In other words, this is 'fossil- fatherism.' 'The fossil has created God.' From the fossil conception, God consciousness has 'come.' The fossil is supposed to evolve to the human species, and the God-conception grows in the human section. So fossil is the 'cause' to produce God-conception. Fossil is the 'father' of God. So, to think that mundane intoxication can give birth to the happy ecstasy of the conception of the absolute beauty and sweetness - this is atheism.

Although consciousness is subtle, it is more durable than these fossils of the mundane. We must not be afraid of transforming, or 'dying'; we should welcome the death of our ego. 'Die to live.' If our motivation comes from the proper source, we shall also know the troubles we face as not mere renunciation. We must not accept only trouble, but we have to fulfill His purpose. The inner sacrifice is more necessary than the external sacrifice. So yukta-vairagya (abnegation in the spirit of devotion) has been recommended to be the most useful. Physical affliction is not our aim and object. Our object is to satisfy Him, and thus, whatever policy may be considered best for us will be recommended from there. We have to accept wholesale surrender to the higher agency. That is necessary. If we are allowed to consider our own case, we shall accept yukta-vairagya, because privation or affliction is not our end. Our end is to satisfy Krsna. The fire lit by our Guru Maharaja must be allowed to burn. We must not keep a feeble fire. The ideal that Gurudeva has given is very rarely found in this world. Out of thousands and millions of chances, we may have such a seed sown in our heart.

manusyanam sahasresu, kascid yatati siddhaye
yatatam api siddhanam, kascin mam vetti tattvatah
(Bg. 7.3)

"Out of countless souls, some have reached the human form of life, and among many thousands of human beings, some endeavor to attain direct perception of the individual soul and the Supersoul; and among many thousands of such aspirants who have attained to Seeing the soul and the Supersoul, only a few receive actual perception of Me, Syama-sundara."

brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva
guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija
(C.c. Madhya 19.151)

"According to the thread of their karma, the living beings are wandering throughout many species of life in the universe. Among all such wandering souls, one for whom the fortune of spiritual merit (sukrti) has arisen by which devotion is facilitated, gains the seed of the creeper of devotion by the grace of Guru and Krsna; that seed is good faith (sraddha)."

It is not a light thing. We must know that this seed of Krsna consciousness is the most valuable thing in the whole of creation. "Everything - good or bad - belongs to Krsna, and I am His unconditional servitor." Our general thought must be like this, and the details will develop gradually. We need not apprehend any injustice. He is Absolute Good, so His mercy is absolute, His love is absolute; He is the loving center. We must make our heart broad, wide, to accept such a seed. Love is the widest thing. Love can accommodate even the enemy. Love is not afraid of any sacrifice, so it can accommodate even the enemy, and he is thereby conquered. Such conquering is complete and perfect. Our conquest is not perfect, but love's conquest is perfect. So we must be prepared to pay the value of this greatest achievement. 'Die to live.' What can I give? Everything belongs to Him, and I also belong to Him. I must admit that I am His. This much is necessary. This is the central knowledge, and it is not unreasonable. I am not out of central control, and His all-controlling potency is not power, but love. This is the most liberal proposal, good news, and fortune.

Suspicion leads to suspension

Suspicion and hesitation are the worst enemies. We may be near to the truth, but because of our previous karma, our suspecting nature deceives us. In Sri Gita it is mentioned, sam-sayatma-vinasyati - the suspicious are doomed. Time is valuable, but it is passing in mere hesitation. If a general is sent to the battlefield and he harbors a suspicious mentality, what can he attain? Nothing. He will put all his soldiers into the jaw of the enemy general. But he should have a definite plan, and engage with proper intensity; to fight with maya - and maya is willing. The enemy is willing. One should feel his personal deficiency, and fight for the center. And supplies and fortifications must be had from the highest and most special department - sadhu-sanga. Sadhu and sastra. With the help of the saints and the scriptures we must subdue the enemy within us and within our house. The worst part of the problem is that the enemy is not without but within. And we must get help from without - the most intimate friends of the Krsna world. They are our real friends. We are troubled by our enemies lust, anger, greed, etc., (kama, krodha, lobha, etc.), and doubt or suspicion is also our enemy. There is also insanity, illusion, and hatred (mada, moha, mat-sarya). Hesitation comes out of ignorance, or moha.

parinisthito 'pi nairgunye, uttamah-sloka-lilaya
grhita-ceta rajarse, akhyanam yad adhitavan
(Bha: 2 1 9)

Sri Sukadeva Goswami explained to Maharaja Pariksit and all the topmost assembled sages, "This illusory world is full of variety and movement, and above it is the Brahman, the non-diffe-

rentiated plane of the Absolute. But on the other side, there is again a differentiated and specified world, the adhoksaja world (beyond sensual perception). This Brahman is not the ultimate existence, but crossing Brahman, on the other side, there is an adhoksaja world. There, we find Krsna-lila, which is not a thing of this mundane world. You all know I have no charm for this world whatsoever. And my mind was attracted by the charm of that higher lila. Today I shall speak to you all about that lila (divine pastimes)."

The king and the sages had to give their undivided attention. "What does he say? This young boy, over sixteen years of age, does not even care to use any clothing. He goes naked. He feels no excitement, and he is constantly engaged in Brahman conception. And he says that there is another world on the other side of this Brahman! And Krsna-lila is the wealth of that side." They could not but give audience attentively. "And what does he say? How does he know? And what is the nature of that lila he speaks about?" They became more and more attentive to hear.

Sometimes musicians think that music will create disturbance in the stage of Brahman, but in the highest stage we are told there are musical instruments such as the flute, vina, and many others. There are expert musicians there, but they are already fully established in satisfying Krsna's senses, doing nothing for their own. Otherwise, music captures and attracts our minds towards this material plane. The element must be spiritual - all service. Krsna-lila springs up from the land of dedication, and the imitation is in the land of exploitation. And midway is Brahman, the land of cessation - sever everything. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvadau, svayam eva sphuraty adah*: when the Lord's transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes are spiritually served with all our faculties, He personally makes His gracious appearance within our spiritual senses. We must be very attentive to the tests that face us in service. No deception can stand there.

ataeva kama-preme bahuta antara
kama - andhatamah, prema - nirmala bhaskara
(C.c. Adi 4.171)

"There is a gulf of difference between lust and love; lust is dense darkness, love is the brightest sun."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says,

kama-preme dekho bhai, laksanete bheda nai,
tabhu kama 'prema' nahi haya

"My brother, lust and love appear as one and the same; yet, lust is never love."
Karma-mamsamaya kama - lust is only concerned with flesh and blood, but prema is the *cid-ananda-dhama* - the abode of consciousness and blissfulness. There is no question of perceiving it through these mundane senses. Our ideal must be pure, and we must strive for it. We may be in a lower position but if the ideal is clearly before us, that will help us in our real improvement of life. A man who possesses the true ideal is a real 'capitalist' in gaining a better position.

jato-sraddho mat-kathasu, nirvinnah sarva-karmasu
veda-duhkhatmakan kaman, parityage 'py anisvarah
(Bha: 11.20.27)

"A person who has developed faith in narrations of My divine nature and pastimes may still for some time suffer the reactions to his worldly deeds (karma); although he perceives his addictions to worldly pleasures to be the essence of his misery, he is unable to abandon them."

He knows what is good, what is bad, but he can't help himself from falling into the clutches of the mundane senses. Still, he will repent.

bhumau-skhalita-padanam, bhumir evavalambanam
tvayi jataparadhanam, tvam eva saranam prabho
(Skanda-purana)

"For those who have stumbled and fallen upon the ground, that very ground is the only support by which they can arise once again. Likewise, for those who have offended You, O Lord, You alone are their only refuge."

In the beginning, when a child tries to walk, he falls down. But he gets up and tries again. In this way, we must proceed but we must not stoop to deceive ourselves. That is maya, deception. To deceive our own self and others is only to live in the world of deception. Such persons are deceiving themselves, and the environment also.

Those who can conquer their partiality and prejudices can stand amongst the most qualified. The eye to detect our disqualification is our real wealth. And we are given the eye to see by the grace of our Gurudeva. *Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya, caksur unmilitam yena, tasmai sri-gurave namah*: "I worship my Guru who has opened my eyes that were blinded with the darkness of ignorance, by adorning them with the collyrium of knowledge." Most important is the eye to see what is good, what is bad, and then to accept and reject. First the eye is necessary. Then there is justice, and above that there is mercy. Justice is the standard, but above that we can conceive that there is also a land of mercy, compassion, grace.

Increase the power of your position as a negative unit

With our faith and earnestness we can aspire after that mercy. If we increase the quality of our negativity, or the feeling that we are so mean, the positive will be automatically attracted. Try to increase the power of your position as a negative unit.

Trnad api sunicena (by feeling oneself lower than the grass), dainyam (humility), atmanivedana (surrender).

Hankering in surrender is our wealth. We are the sakti, the potency, and potency refers to the negative unit of the positive, the Potent. Increase your negative side, your hankering. The positive will be automatically attracted to you.
In the impartial judgment, tatastha-vicara, we must find that the more humility, dainyam, we possess, the more devotion and intimacy we possess. Health depends on hunger. The more one feels hunger, the better his health may be; that is, real, natural hunger. It is something like this. And humility is to feel, 'I am the lowest.' So in this comparison, the more one has realized the Infinite, the more he thinks, 'I am the lowest.'

How could I keep my life if Mahaprabhu did not come down to this plane?

yadi gaura na ha 'ta, tabe ki haita
kemane dharitam de

In the pastimes of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, one of the principal Gopis of Srimati Radharani, one of the asta-sakhis of Vrndavana, came here as Vasudeva Ghosh. In appreciation of Mahaprabhu's descent here, he says, How could I keep up my life if Gauranga Mahaprabhu did not come down? If I did not come in touch with Gauranga Mahaprabhu, how could I live at all? That is so near to life, so near to vitality. It is the vitality of the vitality. If I had not come in touch with such a potent vitality, I should have been finished." In this way, our intimacy may accommodate Sriman Mahaprabhu. Vasudeva Ghosh said, "I could not live at all if such nectar had not been extended into me. It would have been completely impossible to go on with my life."

Chapter Nine

Faith in the Land of Sacrifice

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is putting the questions and Sri Ramananda Raya is answering: in this posing, the entirety of theological development was expressed there on the banks of the Godavari River. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is magnanimity and sweetness combined. And that meeting on the banks of the Godavari was the only time Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu revealed His real identity. He revealed it to Sri Ramananda Raya in that place only, and we never find it anywhere else. *Rasa-raja, mahabhava - dui eka rupa*: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is both Radha and Krsna combined. The most secret portion of the Truth was shown there, only once; and we never find that it was expressed in any other place.

A new grant never given to the world before

The whole cause of existence is twofold: the Predominated Part of Beauty and the Predominating Part of Beauty. This has been taught by Sri Caitanya Maha-prabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam. Not power or force, but beauty and love is the Prime Cause. This is a new grant to the world, which was never given to the world before: the Prime Cause of the whole infinity is beauty and love. And this is the speciality of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

So we need not be afraid. Apprehension is a superficial thing - it is maya, illusion. In the depth of our life's achievement, there is no apprehension; all is love and beauty. Our future is guaranteed in a most optimistic way In his Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam, Srila Sanatana Goswami tries his best to take us through the path of gradual development in devotion. Prahlada Maharaja has been accepted as the basis, the beginning of pure devotion, suddha-bhakti, in peacefulness or santa-rasa. Hanuman is above that, in servitorship, or dasya-rasa. Above that are the Pandavas in friendship or sakhya-rasa. And Uddhava is somewhat in friendship, connecting with parenthood, vatsalya-rasa, and consorthood, madhura-rasa. In this way, adherence in devotion for Krsna automatically flows towards Vrndavana. The acme is in Vrndavana. This is also found in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's conversation with Sri Ramananda Raya.

Rsis are seers and feelers of spiritual current, not creators

Tebhyas tah pasu-pala-pankaja-drsas-tabhyo 'pi sa radhika (Sri Upadesamrta, 10): and the high devotion of Srimati Radharani is categorically different from that of all the Gopis. The type of service found in Her is practically unaccountable, inconceivable. *srutibhir vimrgyam* (Bha: 10.47.61): the Rsis, the Seers, saw that the Vedic mantras were eternal. They are not creators of the mantras in the Vedas, they are only seers and feelers of spiritual current; they are only observers.

The knowledge that is contained in the Sruti (Vedas) is not created by anyone or anything. It is eternal and flowing. The Rsis are onlookers and recorders. And that Sruti has come to reveal the Fundamental Truth underlying the whole creation; still, they are only inquisitive of some-thing, they are inquiring about something. What that thing is, they do not know. They are only searching for the highest revelation that ever came down in the world. They are only searching for that reality, but they have not yet come into its connection. And this is Krsna-bhakti and Vraja-bhakti - loving devotion for Krsna in Vrndavana. And Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam ca-

me with the quality of that type of adherence to the Truth: uncon-ditional surrender, adherence, searching, and serving attitude, seeking such fortune of serving the Truth. That higher type of truth and existence is such that if we can be only a seeker after it, we may consider ourselves to be possessors of the highest fortune. We can really post ourselves in the path leading to that Highest Truth.

The criterion for our self-surrender

That quality is the very basis and the degree of self- surrender (atma-nivedanam). What ever beautiful and valuable things we come across, we cannot but surrender ourselves to them. That is the criterion. If we come across anything higher within our vicinity, our appreciation means surrendering ourselves unto that. So according to the degree of our surrender, we have to measure what degree of quality of truth we have come across. That can be measured only according to the degree and intensity of surrender, or how much we could surrender to what we came into connection with, to the point of no return. And the true devotees know no satisfaction or fulfillment of feeling that "I have it They feel no trace of such satisfaction that "I have achieved."
Never. The inner sweetness of the truth and its infinite characteristic is such. It attracts. It can attract to the highest degree and magnitude. When some of the Brah-manas performing sacrifices wanted their wives to attend the yajna, some of the ladies were on their way to see Krsna at the time. One Brahmana came and forcibly opposed this. He stopped his wife, "No! I will not allow you to see Krsna." He stopped her body, but the life expired. The dead body remained there. She felt so much attraction to have a darsana, a divine glimpse, of Krsna. Immediately a lifeless body stood there, the life vanished.

A 'oneness' in which one's separate existence is maintained

Krsna is Beauty - Reality the Beautiful. Beauty absorbs us. The mayavadis, the impersonalists, say that the Brahman absorbs the individual soul so much that no trace of it remains. But this is an artificial conception of absorption. In the real conception of absorption, the existence of the seer of the truth is not done away with. He remains, but he is absorbed with life. He is so absorbed and attracted that he becomes one. Even main-taining his separate existence, he is always one, full of Krsna consciousness to the highest degree, and this is visible to the world outside. The 'oneness' of the mayavadis is of course crossed in the beginning. *Brahma-bhutah prasannatma na socati na kanksati, samah sarvesu bhutesu*: "I am one with Brahman" - that stage is surpassed, and then - *mad bhaktim labhate param*, devotion is attained. There is oneness in divine attraction, union, and separation, in different lila or pastimes. To maintain the setting of lila, the lila is maintained. Here, complete absorption and oneness does not mean that everything is annihilated. Lila is also eternal; the Lord's nama (name), rupa (form, beauty), guna (qualities), parikara (entourage), lila (pastimes) all are eternal. His relationship is a dynamic thing, not a static one. There is even union in separation. There is unity in every stage. The dynamic character of His pastimes requires unity, otherwise His Self-giving and the devotees' God-attain-ment would have been impossible.

When I entered Sri Gaudiya Math, I received Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's small Bengali book, Saranagati, for the very first time. It was so sweet to me that I purchased several copies and distributed them amongst my friends. Its price was only four paise. It is so sweet, it touched my heart. I thought, "Here is Krsna - Krsna-katha (talks of Krsna) is Krsna Himself. Here is talk about Krsna,

the adhoksaja, the transcendental." I later composed a short commentary when I was in Nandagram, and it is published along with Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's commentary in Bengali.

I wrote an introductory poem to the commentary of Saranagati:

svairacarabdhi-sammagnan, jivan gauranghri-pankaje
uddhrtya saranapatter, mahatmyam samabodhayat

"All the conditioned souls are sammagnan - they are diving or struggling in the ocean of svairacara or pleasure-seeking - anyabhilasa - immoral or whimsical activities, energizing there. Gauranghri-pankaje uddhrtya: taking them out of that ocean, you put them in the lotus - you took them to the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga. You collected them from the wide, troubled ocean, and gave them to the lotus feet of Gauranga. *Uddhrtya sarana-patter mahatmyam samabodhayat*: and so, having placed them there, you began to instruct them about the great nobility of and high value of saranagati, exclusive surrender Samabodhayat: you tried to make them understand and realize the efficacy of saranagati roper. You, my Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada did so, so I bow down unto you first." Then I also wrote a verse offering obeisances unto the writer of Saranagati, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Admission of saranagati. When our appreciation for saranagati comes, we will realize that we have come into the relativity of a great substance. Otherwise, one cannot find the necessity of saranagati at all. "Why saranagati? We want mastery over everything!" Modern science, the exploitationists, the karmis - they want everything under their control. But this is just the opposite, and opposite to the highest degree. In this, we shall find such a great and noble aspect of nature that we will voluntarily offer ourselves to be the eternal servant of it. "I am in the relativity of such a magnanimous, noble thing!" Saranagati, herself, is reality. She contains Krsna within her boundary. Come to saranagati, and you will find Krsna. The halo of Krsna is saranagati. Through saranagati you can approach the Krsna conception, but not by inquiry. Not by barren inquiry, but sincere and substantial inquiry - and that requires saranagati. Prani-pata, pariprasna, and seva. Pranipata: first you must give exclusive respect to Him. If you want to approach Him at all the first qualification is pranipata: you must surrender.

We are approaching a great thing, great in the infinite. And then, there is pariprasna, inquiry, to a certain extent. And then service - to be utilized by Him. To serve means to taste the juice. Only by serving can we connect, feel, and have any experience. This is just the opposite of enjoyment and indifference. Enjoyment, indifference - and service. And there is service as duty, and service as love - loving service. Thus, service is generally of two kinds. Service from the standpoint of duty is found in Vaikuntha. Of course, that also fetches something. But service in love, service actuated through love only, is most amply giving. That gives us amply. And there is also a gradation therein - santa, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, madhura. This is reality. In this material world, in the world of 'enjoyment,' we also find the most intense enjoyment in lady-love, but this is the perverted reflection of reality. But there in the divine plane, in devotional service, divine consorthood is found in madhura-rasa. There also, in that section of devotees, there are gradations of servitors.

The Ramanuja Sampradaya (Divine Succession founded by Sri Ramanujacarya) divided into two, the Tenkalai and Vadakalai sections. Vadakalai refers to those who give more importance to

the Vedic scriptures, and Tenkalai are those who give stress to the Tamil scriptures. They are known as Alwars, beginning from Sathakopar or Nammalwara. In the process of surrender, the Tamilian school lay stress on marjjara-nyaya, or the maxim of the cat. Marjjara means 'cat.' In the cat's dealing with her kitten, the kitten does not do anything, whereas the mother catches the kitten's neck in her teeth and moves it here and there, wherever she likes. The kitten is passive, no attempt can be seen on its part. He simply accepts what-ever the mother does. She feeds him, moves him, etc. This is marjjara-nyaya. The Vedic school, which was headed by Desikacaryya, favor the markata-nyaya, the maxim of the monkey.

The cub catches hold of the mother's body, and then the mother wanders and moves the cub here and there. But the beauty of the cub is to clasp the mother's body. So the Vedic school says, "You have free will, O jiva soul - you have something to do. In saranagati, you have your part to play. It may be very small, but still you have some part to play. You are endowed with free will, so you must properly utilize your free will." And in the Tenkalai system they say, "No, we have nothing to do. We only need to think that we are His, and He will do whatever is necessary on our behalf." This is the difference between the two schools. The Vedic school holds that some action for free will is necessary. Your pure acceptance and consent is necessary, and the rest will be done by the Lord. But your consent or free will of acceptance, however meager it may be, must be present. This is pure consent. And the Tenkalai section hold that we have nothing to do.

Our consideration is nearer to this Vadakalai school, the Vedic school. The jiva has something to do in the way of cooperation or consent. Otherwise, how can the jiva be a part of the Absolute? If the jiva has nothing to do, then everything is God's lila, spontaneous pastimes, and the jivas are all dolls of play in the hand of the Lord. No doubt, this may be so in the highest stage of realization. but that stage is yet to be attained. In the beginning, one has to acquire such a position. Because the jiva is part of the subjective world, he is naturally endowed with freedom.

There can be no consciousness without freedom. Because he is an infinitesi-mal particle, his freedom is also very small, still, because he is spirit, he cannot but possess free will. In divine service that freedom is maintained otherwise vilasa, freedom of movement in pastimes, cannot be maintained. In Goloka, everyone is mostly actuated by feeling, by Yogamaya (internal divine potency); they are actuated by love, but still they have their meager personal consideration, and that is influenced by the all-good and favorable environment of the divine plane. Otherwise, how would they maintain their particular name, pastime, and service? So individuality in the atomic energy is maintained all through. We do not deny the influence of the environment, but the environment cannot devour the personal character of existence of anything and everything.

Of exploitation and renunciation (bhukti and mukti), renunciation is more dangerous, because it holds a greater position than exploitation. It can exploit more, just as half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood. It can misguide the devotees more. It has its own special glamour, over and above exploitation. It can capture the scholars. One who wants relief can think, "Oh, this is the conception of relief; there is no further." Renunciation captures those who may have been making real progress towards their good, and tells them, "Yes, you have come here, you have succeeded." It captures them in the name of the higher plane. Renunciation holds some prestige over exploitation; people think, "Oh, that must be the highest goal." So, in this way, half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood.

se du 'era madhye visayi tabu bhala
mayavadi-sanga nahi magi kona kala
(Saranagati, 27)

"The association of a materialist is preferable to that of a mayavadi."

If the mayavadi can make you enter into the cell of sayujya-mukti, the liberation of merging with the Ab-solute, you are finished. There is no calculable time when you will be able to emerge from it. But if you are in materialism, visaya, the recruiters may come to you. You may get the chance of meeting a preacher in this material world. But in sayujya-mukti you are nowhere. It is very difficult and rare to awaken you from the deepest possible sleep. So that is more dangerous, as half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood.

The mayavadi may even try to bring others into his impersonal conception, because he is suffering from that disease. He thinks that impersonal liberation is the highest, so he recruits for his own purpose. *Ye nye 'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas tvayi astabhavad avisud-dha-buddhayah* (Bha: 10.2.42). They do not perceive the mistake in their calculation, but they think they have attained the highest type of liberation, and so they try to recruit others for their purpose. But there is a mistake in their calculation. They are not aware of the fact. They are misguided and they also help to misguide others. How can one who is not established in the truth guide others towards the truth? If it had been possible for him to know the truth, he would have gone toward the land of truth himself; but he has no knowledge of it. He has miscalculated.

Yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyah: but there is a conscious land, and whoever is accepted by that land can enter it. Otherwise, by dint of one's own power, no one can enter that land. This point has been missed by the mayavadis. That is an independent element; the soil is independent. Matter is not independent, and the soul is 'independent' here in the material world. But the conscious world is made of supersoul - the very soil is independent. If the min-utely independent soul accepts that land, he can enter that land, otherwise not. There is such a land. So the question of becoming a slave must arise.

Accept slavery to its perfection

The highest qualification within us is our acceptance of the slave mentality for the Absolute. This is the only way to be earnest for the association of the highest existence. We must be ready to accept slavery to its perfection, and then we will be allowed to enter into that domain. Otherwise, we have no hope. It is not very easy to embrace slave mentality - eternal slavery. Slavery is also our future prospect. Are you ready to think like this? You have to be so broadminded and hopeful that such a higher entity exists. Your hope and faith will have to be of such a magnanimous type to enter that land. You will sign the bond, the contract: "I am going to accept eternal slavery! I want to enter that land!" You have to search your fortune, and sign the bond of slavery: the association there is so high that even as a slave I want that association. I earnestly hanker for that sweet land where my meager personality can become a slave. Such intense faith is necessary, where all other experience, even knowledge, fails. Only faith can carry us there.

Become a slave there you will become a master

Sraddha - faith in devotion to Krsna is the unit with which the whole structure has been constructed there. All is faith. The land of faith. There, faith holds autonomy. Everything moves through faith - no calculation, no robbing, no stealing, no cheating. This is automatic there in the land of faith. None of this nasty life. "I shall always be alert that I may not be cheated in the land of so many cheats; Here, I always have to be alert - I will be cheated, I will be cheated." That is a nasty life. So we must enter into a life where there is automatically no cheating, no calculation, and no reasoning. All are good - all are busy to give you something. Here, we are suffering from the opposite. But there, everyone is promoting you in your progress, pushing you towards your highest fortune. Such a land is there. To become a slave there is really to become a master. Whoever tends most toward slavery will be held by all as the head!

Just as in love of country. If a leader is most sacrificing, he naturally becomes the head of the party. Sacrificing is his qualification. Generally, men have faith in one who has sacrificed much for the country, and they take him as their leader. But here in the mundane world, love of country is only extended selfishness. They will fight with another country. Or, for humanitarianism they will fight with other minerals or the vegetable or the animal kingdom. They are constructing a great civilization at the cost of the vegetable and mineral substances. The 'civilized' section are busy only to exploit nature, and that will have to be paid to the farthing to clear the debt.

All their comfort is more than a loan. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu wants his followers to be agents to preach Krsna's devotion to the public (*yare dekho, tare kaho, 'krsna' upadesa*) - speak about the special prospect of the land of Krsna, Vrndavana. To give oneself is the substance of devotion.

sravana-kirtanadinam, bhakty-anganam hi yajane
aksamasyapi sarvaptih, prapattyaiva harav iti
(Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam 1.40)

If one is not able, or does not have the opportunity to execute the different forms of services to Krsna, if he has only saranagati, he will accomplish everything in the future. Saranagati will give everything. Saranagati is the most fundamental and basic substance in the devotional world. The whole structure of the devotional world is based on saranagati. Without saranagati there can be no real entrance into the domain of service. Saranagati is the very life and essence of devotion, so it must be present in all forms of services. Without saranagati, service will be mere imitation, mere lifeless activity, and not devotion proper. Saranagati is the first condition. Prahlada Maharaja has said, manye tad etad akhilam nigamasya satyam, svatmarpanam svasuhrdah paramasya pumsah: the whole gist of Vedic teachings is svatmarpanam - to give and fully dedicate oneself to the Lord. To give oneself is the substance of all devotional activity. This is also stated by Sri Sridhara Swamipada in his commentary of the nine basic devotional practices *(sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam*, etc.). If devotional hearing, chanting, etc., is already dedicated to Him, only then will it get recognition as devotion, bhakti. Otherwise, everything is bogus. If I hear to fulfill my mundane purpose, then it is no longer bhakti. If I perform kirtana or speak Hari-katha to make some money, then it will not be bhakti. "Whatever I shall do, it is for Him." That sort of bond must first be 'signed' and then whatever will be done on that basis will be recognized as bhakti. This is the foundation of bhakti. Without saranagati, all attempts will be exploitation,

renunciation, meditation (karma, jnana, yoga), anything but bhakti. "The result must always go to my Lord; I am His slave - nitya dasa."

"I am wholly His servant, without any independence to keep my independent property. Whatever I shall acquire, or whatever I shall do, the owner is He "

Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa: nitya dasa means eternal servant, that is, slave. He has the right to make or mar, to do anything with me as He likes, according to His sweet will. So whenever we perform devotional hearing, chanting, remembering, with this feeling, that will be devotional activity. But if that is withdrawn, everything will go to hell. If the plank of the dancing stage is withdrawn, the whole show is gone. Therefore with saranagati, self-dedication, devotion is possible. Only the activity of the man of dedicated self can be reckoned as bhakti. He does everything on behalf of Krsna. He always takes Krsna's side, abandoning all separate interest for the fruit of his work.

Consciousness of separate interest (*dvitiyabhini-vesatah*) has made us separate from Krsna. The common interest is solely in Him. Then only our service will be bhakti.
Without that, everything is lost. Saranagati must be present in order to have living devotion, otherwise hearing and chanting are only forms, not life. Therefore saranagati means exclusive connection and identification with the interest of Krsna. And Krsna is not directly seen by us, so we serve the Guru and the Vaisnava who are dear to Him. According to the degree of our self-abnegation in self-surrender we will be benefited, and the specific characteristics of santa-, dasya-, sakhya-, vatsalya-, or madhura-rasa will develop, and there are also subdivisions within these rasas. In this way, the devotee will be properly located. But without saranagati, all the formal practices will lose their life and will become something other than bhakti, either in the plane of exploitation or the plane of renunciation; but the plane of dedication is the land of devotion.

By His sweet will, sometimes the attention of the Lord is drawn towards the most needy, and sometimes a more qualified person may be ignored. We cannot interfere with His independence: "Why have You shown mercy in this case, and not in mine?" We cannot take Him under law. That is not saranagati or surrender. When we put such a question to Him, we deviate from the position of saranagati; we cannot expect to be enlisted, even in the primary class.

If You come to examine my case, I am hopeless; so, I have come only for Your mercy

So what is the spirit of saranagati? "If You come to consider my case, calculate my position, I have no hope. I am such a mean fellow; if You come to calculate right and wrong about me, I have no hope. So I have come to that school of Yours where only mercy will be my hope. I want only Your mercy, but if You come to examine me, I have no hope." This is the primary necessity in our saranagati, in our surrendering. Surrender means this.

Surrender does not allow us to think, "Why have you shown grace to him and not to me?" This is anti-surrendering temperament. No calculation. "If You come to calculate, I have no hope; so if You can show me some grace - some causeless mercy - then I have that hope. I have come to this department of the Lord, by surrendering. Anyone may have His voluntary mercy, but I may not. If I hesitate and think about justice, then I am already canceled from the list. My name will be struck from the register."

This is one of the finest points in saranagati. What is surrender, and what should be the quality of surrender? *Marabi rakhabi yo iccha tohara* (Saranagati, 11): "According to Your sweet will, You can make or mar me." With such understanding we can go to surrender. Calculation is not allowed in that department of causeless mercy. Mercy may be extended to everyone except me, but I have nothing to complain about. What more can one give than this? This is the thunderbolt from the blue! To become saranagata, to surrender, means to leave all prospects - to be so emptied - "I have no prospect"; to be fully emptied, and then to surrender. There cannot be the least application in the petition: surrender means a clean slate. Complete dependence upon Him means He can make or mar. I must admit my Master's right to make or mar. I am a slave. Mahaprabhu says, *jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa.*

That is Your constitutional position. Have you enough boldness to admit it? Can you admit that your Master has full rights over you? "Yes! My Master has fullest rights over me. I am ready to go to eternal hell to supply His slightest pleasure." Such narrations - as for example, we have heard the story about when the Gopis were ready to supply their foot-dust as 'medicine' to alleviate Krsna's 'headache' - such narrations we may hear as very sweet to our ears, but to accept is horrible. *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa*; no risk: no gain. Whole risk: whole gain. Such confidence is necessary. A free, clear, and bold choice. Are you ready for that? Krsna is not like a sweetmeat, that His price may be so cheap or so expensive. He is everywhere He is nowhere. He may say, "You all belong to Me," or, "I don't care for any of you." We are inhabitants of that land now, and really, by constitution we have every right to serve Him. It is the truth, and we must be bold enough to 'call a spade a spade.'

Can you accept that you are the eternal servant - you are a slave of Krsna? And Krsna is so dignified that even His slave holds the highest position: Krsna's nature is such that He does not hesitate to serve even His slaves. He is so great and magnanimous. *Aham bhakta-paradhino, hy asvatantra iva dvija* (Bha: 9.4.63): "I feel My tendency to serve My devotee in such a way that I am not independent; I feel Myself to be under their direction."

This is the nature of devotion - bhakti. Bhakti is infinitely more wonderful than jnana, knowledge. To 'know everything' is a very charming temptation. That makes one think that he has become the master of almost everything. But seva, service, is far above this kind of consciousness. Real knowledge practically becomes your servant, if you follow the path of surrender, saranagati. The Infinite comes within the fist of the finite. Can you imagine it? Is it imaginable?

Sometimes we hear about a great general falling into the clutches of a loving girl - a great dictator who commands a whole country's forces may be in the clutches of a girl. *Sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*: and Lord Krsna, the Autocrat, is controlled by love, and nothing else. Divine love, prema, is such, that it can control the Absolute Autocrat. Even He can be controlled, and this is the clue. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to distribute this; the Master of masters came with this offer: "This path will lead you to a plane where you will be able to control the Master of masters."

brahmadi ye prema-bhakti-yoga vancha kare
taha vilaimu sarva prati ghare ghare
(Chaitanya Bhagavat, Adi 5. 152)

Mahaprabhu came as the most gracious Descent. He brought such nectar, even a drop of which is aspired after by the masters of the creation and dissolution of this visible world, Lord Brahma and Lord Siva.

Chapter Ten

Beyond Doubt

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma
niveditatma vicikirsito me
tad amrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai
(Bhagavatam, 11.29.34)

"When a mortal totally abandons all karma and offers himself to My direction, at that time he acts according to My sweet will and becomes one with Me - he attains the fitness to become My family member in his divine form of saccidananda nature."

This is a transformation that can be seen in the physical system also. The physical cells undergo trans-formation. Old cells vanish - new cells grow. And this also occurs when one accepts prasadam, food offered to the Lord. A revolutionary transformation occurs.
Unconsciously, there is transformation in the physical system, by the gradual process of living a pious and divine life. Imperceptibly, the transformation takes place.

"*Martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma:* he has detached himself from all the activities of this so-called mundane world; niveditatma and he considers himself no longer a member of this material world. He has entered and enlisted in the family, in the entourage, of another plane. And gradually he more and more intensely identifies himself as one of that family, that plane. *Niveditatma vicikirsito me*: he is very busy to find out what can please Me. That is his errand always. He is always seeking how to please Me. That is the only principle in him; he automatically thinks over and over again, 'How can I please Him? How can I please Him?' Tad amrtatvam pratipadyamano: then, indispensibly, such a change cannot but come in him: the necessary transformation. A transformation from mortality to immortality gradually occurs. The progress is sure and substantial.

Mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai: and consequently, he comes to be reckoned as one of My family members." Also in Bhagavad-gita, *visate tad anantaram:* "My devotee enters into My family."

With our bhajana (divine service), such transformation is inevitable. It must happen. Material hankering will be diminished. Mostly in rajo- and tamo-guna (the modes of passion and ignorance) there is dissipation of vital energy, but in sattva-guna (truthfulness, realization) the energy lost is of much less quantity.

bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir
anyatra caisa trika eka-kalah
prapadyamanasya yathasnatah syus
tustih pustih ksudapayo 'nughasam
(Bhagavatam, 11.2.42)

"As with every mouthful an eater feels the threefold effects of satisfaction, his stomach being filled, and his hunger being dispelled, in the same way when a surrendered soul serves the Lord

he realizes devotion of three natures simultaneously: devotion in love, the personal appearance of the Lord who is the abode of love, and detachment from all other things."

Progress can be measured by detecting this kind of transformation within. *Paresanubhavo*: somehow, a conception of the Supreme must grow clearer and clearer in me. What is He? Who is He? *Viraktir anyatra*: and indifference to everything 'non-Krsna' grows in me also. I avoid what does not concern Krsna, and when it appears anyway, it produces some apathy or even irritation in me, "Oh, why has this thing come to me?" The measurement from the negative direction will be how much I am apathetic to 'non-Krsna' things. *Tustih pustih ksudapayo 'nughasam*: and also, the inner hunger should be felt to be fulfilled. "Yes, I am feeling fulfillment." I shall feel self-approval that I am walking in the right direction. I shall have inner sanction of my clear conscience. "Yes, yes, I am doing right." I will feel inner satisfaction.

bhidyate hrdaya-granthis, chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani, mayi drste 'khilatmani
(Bhagavatam 11.20.30)

"When the soul directly beholds Me as the Supreme Soul within all souls, his mundane ego is dissolved, all his doubts are slashed, and all his worldly deeds (karma) are annihilated."

This is a scientific measurement, and of course, science of the transcendental world is not to be applied in the nature of the mundane By this standard of adjustment, we shall gradually make progress towards proper adjustment. If the center is clear, then, of course, the circumference is properly located. Krsna consciousness is the center, and in that consciousness every event can be found to be properly adjusted. In this way, by that inner satisfaction and realization one can measure his personal progress. But this does not mean that his thirst will be quenched; rather, it will increase. But the assurance will come that the direction is the right direction. "I am now making progress in the proper line, because many new things can be explained by that formula. They seemed to be unintelligible and meaningless. Now, what I am told to be the Absolute is harmonizing all these things hitherto unharmonized. These points are being solved. So, *chidyante sarva-samsayah*: the doubts are being cleared, and more satisfaction of a wide and spacious nature, the solution, will be felt in the heart of one who is a real student, a regular student of the Bhagavata school. *Chidyante sarva-samsayah* is a great thing. We cannot accommodate this within the narrow shell of our brain! "All doubts should be cleared? What is this?" It is inconceivable that all doubts will be cleared. But everything will be solved if we accept the harmonizing center in such a point as advised by Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu - Krsna-conception of the Absolute.

Absolute love and charm is all-accommodating. None can deny it. None can say, "I don't want love." It is so universal. One may say, I do not want any grandeur, any power," but, "I do not want any love" - never. Sometimes one may even go as far to say, "I don't want justice." That may be possible. Of course, generally it may be the exception, but still it may be said, "I don't want justice. By justice that man will suffer. Rather, I shall suffer, and that man be saved." Just as Jesus Christ told, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." By that prayer, Lord Christ set justice aside: "No, justice may go on this side, and let me be the sufferer." We can take the risk of dismissing justice, but we can't avoid love. We can give up everything but that love for love. If we have

the eye to see, then we shall see that only to get love, prema, we can give up everything in the world. So how valuable is that thing? And Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam came with that.

Before the Srimad-Bhagavatam appeared in the world, Devarsi Narada came and gave a regular stricture to Srila Vyasadeva: "What have you done for so long? This is nothing! Rather, you did some downright wrong."

jugupsitam dharma-krte 'nusasatah
svabhava-raktasya mahan vyatikramah
yad vakyato dharma idtarah sthito
na manyate tasya nivaranam janah
(Bhagavatam, 1.5.15)

"You have committed a great wrong. In your injunctions of religious duty for the masses, you have sanctioned condemnable worldly works for fulfillment of mundane desires. The masses are already by nature attached to condemnable worldly works for fulfillment of mundane desires. It is a great wrong because the worldly masses will conclude that your messages alone are the central religious duty. Even if they are taught by other knowers of the truth to refrain from those worldly works, they will not accept those teachings, or, they will not be able to understand them for themselves."

"The people generally have natural affinity for these things - dharma, artha, kama, and then moksa (religion, wealth, sense-pleasure, and liberation). You have recommended these four things in a regular and polished way, but this is already their natural demand. When one is over-fed, he wants fasting as a reaction. So, moksa is only a reaction to exploitation. This is already a fact, and you have recommended the same thing. What new thing have you given them? You have done wrong! Why? Because when a person of your status has recommended moksa, it will be difficult to give anything further. No one will be prepared to oppose your opinion, your standard. All will say that Vyasadeva is the highest authority, and that they don't care for the advice of anyone else. The highest authority is Vyasadeva. So it will be very difficult to get the people to accept through other sources anything beyond what you have given.

So, you have done wrong! It may be considered your misdeed. Now, the only relief can be that you yourself will give the fifth end (beyond the aforementioned four common pursuits). You, personally, will have to take this work: 'So far what I have given is very limited, but now I shall give you something far superior.' You alone will have to take up this task, and only then you will have undergone the proper penance necessary for your chastisement. *Mahan vyatikramah* - it is a great wrong, because *jugupsitam* - what is very condemnable; *dharma-krte* - is given under the stamp of religion; the goods under the stamp are ultimately non-religious. What good is that? Only 'to do wrong and not to do wrong.' But to do good - is it not included there? Of bad and non-bad, non-bad does not mean positive good. So, you will have to take this duty with earnestness and clarify the position for the people: 'So far, what I have given you is more or less of a negative character. Now I have come to give you something positive.' In this way, you must create the atmosphere to give them something substantial.

"*Dharma-projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmat-saranam satam* (the religion of the Srimad-Bhagavatam is free from the deceptions of the four ends of humanity, and it is the religion of the true saints). *Nirmatsara* means 'an impartial mentality,' and *matsar*a refers to the jealous. 'So far, I

have given advices to that particular section which is not free from egoistic thinking. I have dealt with them. But now I shall deal with the normal-thinking - the good-hearted people. I shall now advise them.' Because it will be difficult to dissuade the people from the path taught by you, I have therefore come to you. Only through you can the higher, developed conception be given to them. This is the only way."

A new color given to everything delivered previously

So Sri Vyasadeva was chastised in this way by Devarsi Narada. Then, with an outline of ten basic principles (Bhagavatam, 2.20.1,2) he had to meditate, assimilate, and finally reproduce. Devarsi Narada left the asrama, and Sri Vyasadeva began to meditate and assimilate. "So far, this was my conception of religion and non-religion; now some new light has been given to me, and in perspective I have to think out the whole system; the whole system must be colored with a new color. A new color should be given to everything I delivered previously." So, he came to write Srimad-Bhagavatam.

And he also felt, "*Moksa*, the *Brahma-jnana* (liberation in the non-differentiated Absolute), has been given the highest position. Now, the higher conception that has been given to me by Devarsi Narada must be delivered to the world by a person whose *Brahma-jnana* is unquestionably admitted by all the scholars." So he searched for Sukadeva. "Sukadeva is the only person who is very widely respected by the so-called liberationists. This higher doctrine should be brought to light through him, and then the position of Bhagavatam will be automatically unchallengeable. So he hunted after Sukadeva.

He sent a woodsman whose business it was to cut down trees in the jungle and dense forest, and who made a trade from that. He told this sloka to that woodcutter:

nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad
bhavausadhac chrotra-mano 'bhiramat
ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat
puman virajyeta vina pasughnat

"Wherever you will find a boy like my son, you will try to chant this sloka. You always wander in the dense forest, and my boy is there, roaming hither and thither in the jungle. It is very difficult to trace his whereabouts, because he does not stay in one location. Always roaming and wandering, he lives on only leaves and fruits, and he takes water from the river."

Suddenly one day, this sloka caught Sukadeva's attention. "What do these woodcutters say?"

nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad
bhavausadhac chrotra-mano 'bhiramat
ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat
puman virajyeta vina pasughnat

"This big sound, with high meaning „where did they get it from?" Then after hearing twice, thrice, he approached them. "What do you say?" They again repeated, "*Nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad*: who have had all their thirst quenched, satisfied - they come and sing this song; *bhavausad-*

hat: it is the medicine for the solution to birth and death; *srotra-mano 'bhiramat*: and it is always pleasing to the senses. The senses should not be considered as one's eternal enemy, and eliminated from any utility. They can be utilized. This song is very sweet for all the senses. *Srotra-mano 'bhiramat*: both the ear and mind are pleased by a high class of joy. *Ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat puman virajyeta vina pasughnat:* who but a suicide will keep such a conception of life, such a model ideal of his life, at a distance? Only a self-killer can do so! Otherwise, one who is wakeful to his real interest can never avoid the *uttamah-sloka-gunanuvada* - the praise and prayer of the highest entity, the Lord Absolute. Who can keep himself aloof from this highest conception of life which is beyond even *moksa*?"

Then, after having a glimpse into the meaning of this sloka, this poem of Bhagavatam, Sukadeva inquired,

"Where did you obtain this sloka?"
"At Badarikasrama."
"Can you show me the place?"
"Yes, come."

And they took him to Vyasadeva. He could recognize, "Oh, this is my father's asrama. Vyasadeva, my father, requested me to stay with him, but I did not care for that. I ran away to the forest to avoid human society. To avoid being influenced by human society's designing attitude, I left it. However, for the solution I find in this sloka, I cannot but inquire from him."

So he came, and asked his father the meaning of the sloka. Srila Vyasadeva then explained according to the angle of vision that Devarsi Narada had recently given him. And when Sukadeva later delivered the Srimad-Bhagavatam, he openly admitted in the assembly:

parinisthito 'pi nairgunye, uttamahsloka-lilaya
grhita-ceta rajarse, akhyanam yad adhitavan
tad aham te 'bhidhasyami, mahapaurusiko bhavan
yasya sraddadhatam asu, syan mukunde matih sati
(Bhagavatam, 2.1.9,10)

When Pariksit Maharaja inquired from Sri Sukadeva Goswami, Sukadeva first introduced himself in this way: "O sage among kings, despite being excellently merged in the transcendental Brahman, I have studied this Srimad-Bhagavatam because my heart was attracted by the pastimes of the Supreme Lord Uttamasloka.

"King, you are a devotee, and as such you are most qualified to come to Krsna, the Supreme Person; there-fore I shall explain this narrative scripture to you. Swiftly does divine love for the Supreme Lord Mukunda arise within the heart of one who has developed faith in this Srimad-Bhagavatam."

Sri Sukadeva Goswami told Maharaja Pariksit, "You seem to be a student of a high standard of learning (*maha-paurusiko bhavan*). There are many seekers of their future fortune, but you are a bona fide student; presently death is encroaching upon you, so no ordinary aspirations are in your mind. You are a genuine student and inquirer. *Dharma, artha, kama,* and *moksa* (religion,

wealth, sense pleasure, and liberation) are known as the fourfold ends of human inquiry (*purusartha*), but because I consider you to be the most bona fide and sincere seeker of truth (*mahapaurusiko*), I think I can teach you what I have heard from my dear father very recently; I consider that to be the highest end of every life.

The highest standard of education

adhitavan dvaparadau, pitur dvaipayanad aham
(Bhagavatam, 2.1.8)

tad aham te 'bhidhasyami, mahapaurusiko bhavan
(Bhagavatam, 2.1.10)

"At the end of Dvapara-yuga, I studied this Maha-purana Srimad-Bhagavatam from my father, Sri Krsna-dvaipayana Vyasa. I conceive that to be the highest standard of education and you are the fittest man to receive it. Therefore I shall deliver it to you."

Saying this, he began the talk of Bhagavatam. And there he gave the principle of Krsna consciousness, that harmonizes all classes.

To receive descending spiritual knowledge in this way is the method of the deductive school. And the nature of such fit recipients is described as *nirmatsara* - they are free from jealousy. Those who are suffering the disease of jealousy cannot tolerate anyone holding a higher position than themselves. They cannot tolerate the merit of others: "I am the best. None can be greater than me." This is their disease (*matsara*). But the Srimad-Bhagavatam is for those who are free from the disease of such a mean egoistic feeling. The students that come forward to read the Bhagavatam must be of such character that they have conquered that mean egoistic sentiment of considering oneself to be all-in-all. When that sort of mean, egoistic feeling is removed, one will be fit to study Bhagavatam, and he will successfully imbibe the teachings herein and make a great and inconceivably divine improvement in his life.

Vedyam vastavam atra vastu sivadam: "I am not dealing with an imaginary concoction. This is *vastava-vastu*, a realistic thought which death and mortality cannot challenge. I am dealing with such a thing here. The whole world you are living in is unreal, but what I am dealing with here is the only reality. The realistic thought is not unreal. You are suffering from the mania of unreality. *Tapatrayonmulanam*: and your disease will be wholesale cured. The disease and its effect - your suffering - will be uprooted to the extreme."

Chapter Eleven

The Guardian-ruled Family

"The Vaisnava is all in all, and I am nothing." Such a feeling grows infinitely in the Vaisnava. "I am nothing, but he is everything - he is a Vaisnava; Guru and Vaisnava really hold Krsna-bhakti. They are the stockists. But I am empty-handed; I have nothing." This is the nature of the association of the finite with the infinite. As much as we shall have a real approach towards the infinite, we cannot but consider ourselves to be the meanest of the mean. The standard of Vaisnava qualification (vaisnavata) is measured in this way. And this is not lip-deep, but the sincere dealing of the innermost heart. When Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami says, *purisera kite haite muni sei laghistha* - "I am lower than the worm in stool" - this is not mere imitation, but his heartfelt truth. *Acarya-abhimana*, the assertion of the Guru over his disciple, is a different posture. That is assertion, but only for the service of the Vaisnava; the sincerity is maintained therein. The Guru's assertion is not selfish assertion. His assertion is only for the sake of saving the public and upholding the prestige of the Vaisnava. So that is proper adjustment with reality, in twofold senses: to establish the real position of a Vaisnava, and at the same time to save the ordinary persons from the danger and the reaction of false attempt or false thought. So that kind of assertion is not egoistic. Rather, we should know that as sacrifice in the dynamic sense.

In *Visva-vaisnava-raja-sabha*, our Guru Maharaja tactfully managed in this way: he asked one of his disciples to speak something in praise and appreciation of another disciple. And he especially asked this of disciples who were a little antagonistic to one another. He asked them, "Speak something in praise of your 'friend.' " Why? To try to mark the bright side, the svarupa, and to try to ignore the apparent side. He instructed, "You try to speak something in praise of your friend, your apparent opponent." The Guru's order was given, and so the disciple had to speak something in praise. Necessity is the mother of invention; he had to dive deep into the bright side of the other person and try to bring that side out. Thereby, the Vaisnava atmosphere of giving and taking was aroused and the apparent, mayika side was gradually ignored, disregarded and dissipated. Something similar happens in kirtana as well. Why is kirtana so powerful? Because when we are requested to speak something, we cannot but utilize our best attention to speak. We have to assert our best ability in the attempt to gather the proper information to speak something about the Supreme Lord. So, also, in the case of the Vaisnava, as in the case of the Lord, we must approach the svarupa, the inner side, the inner aspect, the bright side - and ignore the apparent side; and thereby we will thrive. There, the real mutual relationship will be aroused. Once a year in the Holy Dhama of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, it was the practice of our Guru Maharaja to preside in a meeting under the banner of

Visva-vaisnava-raja-sabha (Universal Assembly of the Topmost Pure Devotees), and there his method was such: "Try to praise the Vaisnava."

So, to appreciate the nobility of a Vaisnava may be difficult, but if we can do so, we may have a chance to reach a standard of real devotion to a certain extent. It is said by the Lord in the Adi Purana, "One who 'loves Me' does not really love Me; but one who loves My servitors - his love for Me is more real; it is true and of absolute character." We must try to appreciate the character and conduct of the Vaisnava, and thereby we can raise the standard of our own life of dedication.

The infinitesimal and the infinite are very closely connected. The consciousness of the infinitesimal is in this line:

ye yata patita haya, tava daya tata taya,
tate ami supatra dayara
(Gitamala, Yamuna-bhavavali 19)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "Your grace is given in accordance with the necessity of those who really deserve it. In that consideration, I have some claim. I am fallen of the fallen, the most fallen, so I have some claim to Your grace." That should be the attitude of the servitors. Increase the negative side. "I am the most deserving because I am meanest of the mean, poorest of the poor." We have to increase and develop our knowledge towards that side: "I am so low, so needy, so mean, in all respects." That consciousness will draw Him towards you; the mass energy collected (karma) or the attempt to know Him (jnana) cannot do so (*jnana-karmady-anavrtam*). To think, "I can know You, I can measure You" - that is impossible, wild goose-chasing, and this has been declared by Srimad-Bhagavatam. You can never know Him. The closer you come to the boundary of your knowledge, the more you will find Him transcending it. None can bind Him. That was shown in the attempt of Mother Yasoda. When she went to bind Damodara, Krsna, around the waist, the rope was always two fingers short.

yad asit tad api nyunam, tenanyad api sandadhe
tad api dvy-angulam nyunam, yad yad adatta bandhanam
(Bhagavatam, 10.9. 16)

"(After joining the original rope with another) that rope was also short by the measure of two fingers. Then she tied more rope; that also was short by the same treasure. In this way, no matter how much rope she added, it was always short by two fingers."

It is a mathematically impossible margin, but it is such. Similarly, we must know that the Absolute is subjective not objective. Examples like this show us the failure of the objective calculation. Don't go to calculate the transcendental truth by the objective process. The factor of His will can never be eliminated, and that is the real factor. If you approach to calculate about Him, the most realistic thought you must keep in your mind is that it depends on His Supreme Will. He is abhijna, omniscient, and svarat, fully independent. Only He knows what is what and what should be what. It is His monopoly, within His fist. You may conjecture so many alternatives, but to no avail. He knows what He will do; and at the same time, He is not under any obligation to anyone. He cannot be compelled to give any explanation for His deeds. Only He knows what is what, and He is the Absolute Autocrat (*arthesv abhijnah svarat*, Bhagavatam, 1.1.1). He does not care for the consideration of others. If we approach Him with this kind of understanding and impression, we must advance towards the divine realm.

I have no possibility of pressing any demand on Him. There is no possibility of placing any application, "Please consider this or that." But at the same time, we must not forget that He listens only to the words of the devotee who is actually of such a temperament (*aham bhakta-paradhinah*, Bha: 9.4.63). This, also, cannot be eliminated. But who is such a bhakta? One who knows the Lord's nature in this way - he's a devotee. So, to become submissive to him is in other words to keep one's own independence! To be submissive to the surrendered soul amounts to no submission, because it is to submit to a person who is fully His. When He says, "I am subservi-

ent - I work under the direction of My devotee," then who are the devotees? They are those who have surrendered cent-per-cent to His sweet will. Then, in other words, they are as independent as He is. They do not have their independent wishes, but nonetheless, for the sake of the Lord's pastimes, lila, such things are designed by Yogamaya.

Lila has no rhyme and reason; it is dynamic existence

In different rasas we may see that the devotee and the Lord sometimes take opposite sides. Just as Krsna wants to steal, and Yasoda won't allow Him to steal, and she is punishing Him. Apparently they seem to be opposing forces, but Yogamaya, the internal potency of the Lord, is acting. Somehow it is Krsna's will to play like that. A director of a drama may order his actors, "You must say like this; and I shall oppose.“ Lila also is a movement to one point, harmoniously without any disturbance. This is lila. Lila has no rhyme and reason. It is dynamic exist-ence. It is just the opposite of the fossil. And lila is of the nature of rasa or ananda, beauty and charm. Beauty and charm are the very nature of the Lord.

To become disconnected from that original flow is the trouble caused by maya. The conditioned souls are under the potency of maya, as though suffering the disease of insanity. They have lost their own property and wealth. This is maya. Ma means 'what is not,' and ya means 'that.' The word maya is also derived, *miyate anaya iti maya*: *maya* is 'that by which measurement is made.' The spiritual experts inform us that separate interest has been the root cause of all disturbance (*dvitiyabhinivesatah syat*). Really everything is all right, but the spirit of separatism is responsible for the whole anomaly.

bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad
isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih
tan-mayayato budha abhajet tam
bhaktyaikayesam gurudevatatma
(Bha: 11.2.37)

"A person who turns away from the Lord forgets his own innate identity by dint of the maya potency of the Lord, and his perception becomes topsy-turvy whereby he thinks, 'I am the body.' From this, he becomes absorbed in separate interest, identifying himself with the body, senses, etc. This is the cause of all apprehension. Therefore, a judicious person should worship that Supreme Lord with exclusive devotion, casting aside all spurious desires, and with the knowledge that Gurudeva is one's worshipful lord and dearmost friend."

The first stage of deviation is due to separate or self-interest

To think "I can thrive individually," is to ignore the collective line and try for one's separate interest. This fine point is said to be responsible for all the disturbance: "I wanted to seek my own pleasure, separating myself from the consideration of collectiveness." The next stage is *isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih*: deviation from consideration of my master. The first stage is self-interest, and then next is deviation from guardian- consciousness, or to lose the consciousness that "I have my master, my guardian." Separate interest means, "I am my own guardian." Then, *tan-mayayato*: why is it so? Because I am *tatastha*, marginal.

On the other side is maya, and somehow that influence has captured my weak decisive faculty. I am an infinitesimal particle of consciousness with minute independence. But without my cooperation, the mayika or mundane transaction is impossible. So my consent was necessary. With the consent of a minor child, the guardian can do anything and everything. The minority or infinitesimal character is inherent in me, and that makes room for this error. *Tan-mayayato budha abhajet tam*: but because maya is not independent, she also has to work under the guidance of the Supreme Authority; so don't go to maya, but go to He who is the Master of maya. *Tan-mayayato budha, abhajet tam - na tu mayam.* Although maya is coming to capture the soul because of his weakness of cooperating with her, still, *budha*, which means *sumedha* - the pious souls - will go for relief to the Master of *maya*. This is the decision of Srimad-Bhagavatam. *Tan-maya* means *tasya maya* - His *maya*. *Maya* is not the highest entity; she also has her Master. So when the temptation comes in you to perform a bad deed you must file an appeal for help to the Supreme Authority, and not to *maya*.

In the Bhagavad-gita also the Lord says:

daivi hy esa gunamayi, mama maya duratyaya
mam eva ye prapadyante, mayam etam taranti te
(Bhagavad-gita.7.14)

"This trimodal supernatural or alluring deluding potency of Mine is practically insurmountable. However, those who exclusively surrender unto Me can certainly surpass this formidable fantasy."

Maya, misunderstanding, is troubling the fallen souls, but misunderstanding itself cannot give them relief. The Prime Cause of misunderstanding - He alone can give them relief. "So don't go to that side, come to Me. By My instruction that maya will leave you. She's more powerful than you; daivi - she has higher backing, so you must try to seek your relief from the higher office, and not approach directly to maya. That will not be helpful to you. If you have My slightest backing, you can easily escape from that *maya*."

Misunderstanding is there, but it is not very powerful inasmuch as it does not have its own support - it is not independent. It is also dependent on truth. Truth has the better position over misunderstanding. So your transaction should always be with the truth, with the positive. And what is positive truth? *Sat-cit-anandam*: unassailable existence, self-consciousness, and fulfillment. It is fulfillment in itself. In Hegelian philosophy, unassailable existence is described as 'by itself and for itself.' The conscious element in the middle has been suppress-ed in that philosophy. The Absolute Truth feels His Self-consciousness. He feels that He exists. Stone exist-ence may not feel its existence, but soul perceives his existence; he is cit or *cetana* - conscious. But his consciousness is not perfect. It has some want, some demand, some hankering for a higher life. Anandam or rasa is beauty, harmony, love. That is the conception of the fullest integer: having existence, consciousness, and also fulfillment. Not only hankering or knowing is present, but that which is to be hankered for or known about is present there, and that is anandam. Anandam and sundaram are synonymous.

I saw that some of the European philosophers have translated this word anandam as 'beauty,' as in 'Reality the Beautiful.' We find that to be very near to the con-ception of Krsna. Probably it was the philosopher Martineau, a very good linguist and a poet of high style, who proposed that

the ultimate element is 'Reality the Beautiful.' Wordsworth hinted at 'eye-beauty' and 'ear-beauty.' In one poem Wordsworth described a girl of his dreams. He wrote that she was a village girl, and there was a brook alongside that village. He says that the jingling sound of the brook contributed to her beauty. Many scholars tried to give some interpretation to this conception, but one Bengali scholar, Harinath De, who was a master of thirty-two languages, gave the interpretation: 'ear-beauty contributed to eye-beauty.' His explanation was very taking to me. The ear-beauty, the beautiful sound of the brook, added to the appearance of that girl; that means that ear-beauty, or sweet sound, contributed to eye-beauty. Eye beauty, nose-beauty, touch-beauty, etc., all are anandam, rasam, or beauty in the broadest sense.

In another Upanisadic word, it is stated, *satyam, sivam, sundaram. Siva* means *mangalam*. What is the criterion of *mangalam*? *Amangalam* means mortal: mortal is *amangalam* (inauspicious). And immortality is *sivam, mangalam* (auspicious). So *sivam* means immortal, and that means conscious, as found in the soul. Soul is immortal. So, stone is mortal, but soul is immortal. Therefore, soul proper is *siva*; but we see that the soul is vulnerable. Supersoul is beauty, *sundaram*. That is concrete reality as the independent and fullest represen-tation of existence. All other existences are but partial representations of the Absolute. *Sundaram* is satisfaction; the soul is dissatisfied, and for stone there is no question of satisfaction; it possesses only mere existence. But soul is dissatisfied, even though he is an eternal unit of self- consciousness. The words *Siva, Mrtyunjaya* and *Maha-deva* mean 'free from mortality or change; eternal.' But mere eternity is not sufficient. Only *rasam* or *sundaram* can fill the gap. So *sundaram* is the object of our quest. If wherever we go and whatever we do is examined minutely it will be detected that we are searching after beauty, after fulfillment, after sundaram, after rasam.

na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum
durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah
(Bhagavatam, 7.5 31)

"Those whose minds have been polluted by mundane sense-pleasure, and who hold respect for sense-enjoyers addicted to external mundane pleasures - they cannot know of the glories of Lord Visnu, the exclusive refuge of those desirous of attaining the supreme goal of human life."

Externally and ignorantly, it may be seen that we are in quest of this and that - duty, money, sense-pleasure (*dharma, artha, kama*); but this is an external and partial examination of things. But with a deep examination it must be found that we are eagerly searching for only *rasam, sundaram*: the fullest satisfaction, and not for partial, temporary so-called pleasure. So *dharma, artha*, and *kama* cannot satisfy our inner hankering. Not to speak of them, even liberation (*moksa*) from the present flickering hankering is not the goal, and this is the finding of the scholars. Mere liberation from the negative side is an artificial life. Life must have its fulfillment. Everything has its fulfillment and necessary position. It is not meant for nothing! Zero cannot be the conclusion of the whole existence. Infinite is the conclusion, not zero. So mere liber-ation - to remain as in a long, deep slumber - that is destructive and inconclusive. That cannot be the object of creation or the object of our existence. The other side must be searched out - the *cid-vilasa* (the transcendental dynamic plane). And where can we get that? Here in this world is exploitation, and there is just the opposite: dedication.

Bhakti is dedication, after surrender to the center. As I mentioned earlier, we have drifted into separate interest. Now we must give up that separate interest and enter into the undivided family; we

must accept the guardian. We have been advised to enter the guardian-ruled family. We have to adjust ourselves to live in a family under guardianship. But we shall strive to understand that life under a guardian is the wholesome and healthy life. We need not search after our full independence, for that independence cannot solve the problem we are faced with. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a problem. Apparently, it may be thought that by independence the problem may be solved. But it is wrong.

The scriptures and mahajanas come to our help: "No! At present you may think that independence will give you proper satisfaction of your inner heart, but really it is wrong. Your apparent thought is your enemy. You want to get out of any circumstantial infringement, and if you get freedom you'll be happy - this is wrong. Rather, the opposite is true. You should try to live in a joint family. You must be accommodative; you must correct your nature. Your independence is your enemy."

This must be understood. This independence that apparently seems to be your friend is really your enemy, and you must learn how to live together with others. You cannot separate yourself from the environment; it is not possible. That is death, samadhi, or the infinite slumber. That is no life, that is no answer, that is no solution. You must live with many. You must see that you are a part of the whole, and that only your spirit of independence is disturbing you. And you must try to save yourself from the hands of your 'friends.' "God, save me from my friends, my so-called friends."

Only surrender can give you relief, can give you the real, higher life. You will be able to understand that from your innermost heart. In Bhagavad-gita, Krsna has repeatedly hammered this *raga-dvesa* - apathy and sympathy (*raga-dvesa-vi-muktais tu*, Bg. 2.64) Those two are your enemies. Apathy for something and sympathy for something - these are your enemies! Be independent of those two enemies, and concentrate yourself towards your guardian. Know that He is not partial. Your first consideration should be that the guardian is not partial. "I am guardian, but I am friendly to you all (*suhrdam sarva-bhutanam*, Bhagavad-gita, 5.29). Don't leave this thought! I am your guardian, but at the same time I am your friend. Don't forget this, otherwise there alone is the danger in your whole life."

Be optimistic, don't be pessimistic. You are good and all around you is bad, and withdrawal from everything and everyone will give you real bliss? Don't be so selfish-thinking. That is your environment; they should be relied upon - they also have goodness in them. So try to adjust yourself with them. *Tat te 'nukampam* (Bhagavatam, 10.14.8): all our situations in life occur by His grace. Especially try to adjust with the Guardian who is at the bottom of all movement and all creation. Have faith in Him, and through Him, approach your environment. Then everything will be properly adjusted.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam it is said:

sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed, bhagavad-bhavam atmanah
bhutani bhagavaty atmany, esa bhagavatottamah
(Bhagavatam, 11.2.45)

We can attain the highest position in this way. Whatever and whoever we come across, we must see it at the central interest and not from provincial or local interest. Go straight to the center:

bhagavad-bhavam. Then, *atmanah*. Try to see the center in everything, and then in connection with or through the center, come to approach your environment. First go to the center, and from the center, knowing your relationship with the center, come to adjust with your surroundings and company. What is a person's relationship to the center, and what is my relationship to the center? Considering these two factors, I shall ascertain what shall be my relationship with that person. My connection with everything and everyone should be ascertained through the center. My relationship with others must be calculated from the central interest, not the local or partial interest between them. That will be wrong, and that is the root of all evil. This separate relationship is not wholesome. Only go straight to see things through the eye of the interest of the center, and your relationship will descend (*sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed, bhagavad-bhavam - atmanah*). Next, *bhutani bhagavaty* and then *atmani* - vice versa: what is God's relationship with the thing, and what is the thing's relationship with God; and according to that calculation, you come into adjustment with them, with your environment. Then you are out of danger. But eliminating the central interest, if you want to mix together and get your local benefit satisfied in the meantime, you'll be in danger (*yo mam pasyati sarvatra . . . pranasyati*, Bhagavad-gita, 6.30; *sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed . . . esa bhagavatottamah,* Bhagavatam, 11.2.45).

So the environment is not bad. We are suffering from misunderstanding, *maya (na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum*), and that misunderstanding should be cleared. We shall try to live anywhere and everywhere, and we shall see the environment as all-loving, if we have that deep vision to see who is at the basis of all of us, if we find Him. It is also mentioned in the Upanisads that in pure consciousness, one can see nectar everywhere in the wind, in the ocean, in the plants, in the stars every-where.

Try to recognize that your situation is full of honey - full of nectar. Don't try to see only the outer cover. Your vision must be deep enough to see the real position. Then you will find everything is like nectar to you. *Srnvantu visve amrtasya putrah*. This clarion-call is coming from the Veda: "O you sons of nectar! Attempt to listen to my words! You are really sons of the nectar lake. Why should you be like poison? Are you a poisonous unit? Are you now down-trodden to become units of poison? But your real, innate self - you are a drop of the nectar ocean!" *Srnvantu visve amrtasya putrah* - "Awake! Arise! Arise to your self-consciousness that you are a drop of the nectar ocean! Try to realize it!"

Dive deep and you will find nectar - no poison

"Your attachment to the outer cover - not only the covers outside but of yourself also - all are covers in reality. Don't be a 'cover-calculator.' Dive deep into your own self, in the existence of your environment. Dive deep, and you will find all nectar, no poison. Poison is a thing superficial to your real conception." To make much of the cover of things, ignoring the substance within, is nothing but cover transaction (*na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum, durasaya ye bahir artha-mani-nah*). It is poisonous.

In this world, we may think we find something to be beautiful, but beauty in local interest is not real beauty. We have to be able to distinguish between the central interest and the local interest. Beauty for individual possession is poison. We are desirous of independence to enjoy that local beauty. This is the trap. But beauty is meant for the service of Krsna. Everything is meant for Him - there we will find real beauty. The real nature of beauty is present in that which is attracti-

ve to Krsna. Beauty should be measured from the central consideration. The danger lies in consideration of beauty from the separate interest viewpoint.

Get out of the waves of local interest

What is beauty? An object to be enjoyed. To be enjoyed by whom? If by me, then I am lost. Everything is meant for Him, and we have to enjoy beauty like that. If that is possible, we are all right. Whenever we see anything beautiful, it must come to our minds, "Oh, Krsna will be able to enjoy this very much." Our mentality should be like this. Our mentality should be 'center-centered': "Whatever good I see will immediately remind me that Krsna will enjoy it very much." The tasteful - "Krsna has enjoyed this curry; I shall enjoy it subsidiarily. My position is dependent upon how Krsna has enjoyed."

Everything should be seen through Him, and only after that - 'mine.' *Sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah*. 'Mine' should mean 'how Krsna has enjoyed.' Everything may be fittingly enjoyed by Him. I must be Krsna-centered. Then other centers such as beauty to be enjoyed by any other person, not to speak of oneself, will be recognized as risky and poisonous. Beauty - everything - is to be enjoyed by Him. It is meant, it is created, it is sustained - for Him. We must reach this understanding, for this is to be situated in the deepest plane. This is *nirguna*, transcendental. Otherwise, all is *saguna*, or superficial. Get out of the *saguna*, the waves of local interest That may be centered in a family, a village, a country, a species, or human society to the exception of birds, beasts and insects - the circle may increase, but it is still limited. But properly adjusted, we want nothing less than Krsna, so everything must be connected with Him and seen through His interest. My interest should not entertain any independent friendship with anyone. Everything should be done on Krsna's account. Negotiation, transaction, and future prospect - everything is for the center, Krsna. In this way, everything will come to me through the Absolute Good. Then all the poison will be eliminated and whatever comes to me will be mixed with nectar.

So whatever we contact must come via Krsna or His bona fide servant - Gurudeva or Vaisnava, whose cause is inseparable from Krsna's. We can rely upon them. Somehow, everything must percolate through the Absolute Good - not vulnerable or limited goodness - but the Absolute Good. Via that, all transactions between the plurality must be checked and sent as prasadam (merciful remnants) from the center. That should be the proper attitude. And that is really sweet.

If we can come into that plane, we shall feel this. Otherwise, our actions will be performed as duty, by scriptural injunction and so on. But if we can reach the plane of the Absolute Good, our own soul or existence and practical life will bear testimony for us that this life is the topmost, and without it, we cannot live.
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "*Esaba chodata parana harau*: Sri Vrndavana and its surroundings so intensely awaken my remembrance of Krsna; and if these things are taken away from me, I shall lose my very life. They are sustaining me, because they are encouraging me to take to Krsna consciousness. They are all encouraging and helping me towards Krsna consciousness in different aspects. Whatever I see there,
radha-kunda-tata-kunja-kutira, govardhana-parvata-yamuna-tira (the dwelling in the groves on the banks of Sri Radhakunda, the holy Govardhana mountain, the banks of the holy Yamuna river) - reminds me in such a sweet way, taking me towards Krsna conception and Krsna-lila, spreading nectar in my heart. If I am to leave them, then I shall leave my existence. They are all

around me; they are so encouraging and life-giving to me. They are so fulfilling to my life - indeed, they are more than my life! *Kusuma-sarovara, manasa-ganga, kalindanandini vipula-taranga* (the holy lake midway between Mathura, Govardhana, and Radha-kunda, the river at the edge of Govardhana, the rolling waves of the Yamuna); *kha-ga-mrga-kula, malaya-batasa* (the birds and animals, the breezes of spring) what a sweet contribution all these things offer me! Krsna is very near to me! I would die without them. Such beauty, the whole thing takes me with lightning speed directly towards Krsna consciousness, towards His Associates and His pastimes with Them. That is direct nectar, and that will come in me."

radhakundatata-kunjakutira
govardhanaparvata yamunatira
kusumasarovara, manasaganga
kalindanandini vipula-taranga
vamsivata, gokula, dhirasamira
vrndavana-taru latika-vanira
khaga-mrgakula, malaya-batasa
mayura, bhramara, murali-vilasa
venu, srnga, padacihna, meghamala
vasanta, sasanka, sankha karatala
yugala vilase anukula jani
lilavilasa-uddipaka mani
esaba chodata kaha nahi yau
esaba chodata parana harau
bhaktivinoda kahe, suna kana
taya uddipaka hamara parana

The grove-dwelling on the banks of Radha-kunda,
Govardhana mountain, the banks of river Yamuna;
Kusuma-sarovara lake, Manasa-ganga river,
The rolling waves of Yamuna, daughter of the sun;
Place of the Rasa dance, and Gokula, the gentle breezes,
The trees, vines, and Vetasa palms of Vraja;
The birds and animals, the sweet air of spring,
The peacocks, bumblebees, the flute's sweet song;
Flute, horn, His footsteps, range of clouds in the sky,
Season of spring, the moon, the conch, hand-cymbals;
I know all these things are nourishing the pastimes of the Divine Couple,
I can feel they arouse the holy pastimes of the Lord;
I can never leave all these things so dear to me,
Without them I know I'll surely die;
Hear me, O Kan, says Sri Bhaktivinoda:
You are the only light of my life.

This is Vrndavana. Vrndavana is so friendly, so sweet, so near to us, and such a well-wisher of ours. We are quite at home there - sweet, sweet home. *Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti*: in our innate and innermost existence, we are members of that plane. Now we have come out, and

we have scattered our consciousness all over the surface. Cover, cover, cover - there are so many layers, and they are all dry things. And the substance, the spirit, is within. Eliminating this bodily cover, the mental cover, the liberation cover, the Vaikuntha cover - then I may enter into the land of Vraja. Vrndavana resides within me, if I can find my friends everywhere. They are my friends and relatives, and they will give me all-pleasing experience, ecstasy. Mahaprabhu came with this news for us. "Oh, you are a child of that soil; why do you suffer here, my children, my boys? Why do you suffer? *Amrtasya-putrah*: you are a child of that soil, and you are suffering so much, coming in the desert? Your home is so resourceful, so sweet, and you are running in the desert? What is this? Come! Leave this poisonous charm, this suicidal charm. This charm, *maya* charm, misunderstanding charm - this is suicidal. Leave this apparent charm! This is poisonous, like a witch. The witch has charmed you here and made you spellbound. Come along with Me! I shall take you to your home which is so very sweet!"

Mahaprabhu takes us to the East side

In general, this is the call of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Don't try to think yourself a master of so *many siddhis like anima, laghima, vyapti* (becoming small as the atom, lighter than a feather all-pervading, etc.). The thought that you can play with miracles is all lower conception. With *mukti* (liberation), then *siddhi* (yogic super-natural mystic powers), you will have to encounter so many traps and obstacles that your very existence will be at stake. To the South there is the *Bhimarula-varuli*, the hornet's nest of unfulfilled desires (*karma-kanda*); to the West, there is the Yaksa, the deceitful ghost representing the death of merging into the Absolute by supernatural yoga-practice (*yoga- siddhi*); and to the North there is the *Ajagara*, the black python representing the death of merging into the Absolute Brahman by the liberationists on the path of knowledge (*jnana-marga*). They will all bewilder you. But most naturally and with the least effort on your part, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu will take you to the Eastern side, to the wealth that is within your heart. That is universal, spacious, sweet, and most intimate. There is your home, all are mutual well-wishers there. That is the gift of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Gaura Hari bol!

Chapter Twelve

Every Word is a Song

"Where every word is a song, every step is a dance, and the flute is the favorite attendant . . ."
(Sri Brahma-samhita)

Every word is a song . . . but this is not a sound of this plane. This is from some other world, some other world that is so soft, so sweet, so heart-capturing. It is a world where correct behavior occurs most sweetly and harmoniously. Every word is like a song (*katha ganam*). Every movement is sweet, like dancing (natyam gamanam api). It has been described in this way. Everything is replete with the highest degree of beauty. This is the land of beauty - there everything is beautiful. Everything has the touch of beauty divine. The prime cause is charming, attracting, and arresting heart and soul, "Stop!"

There is a land of such existence. Our aspiration is for such a life (*radhika-madhavasam*). We can sincerely foster the idea to feel attraction to a life of such a plane, where everything is of a musical character. The flute of Krsna guides everything. That can even draw out the life from the body.
The sound is so charming, it appears that one's very feeling wants to come out of bodily existence. What-ever part of our body is touched with any sort of such dealing, that part seems to disconnect from the other parts, and - if it is possible to imagine it - that part runs to join the subject. If there is color, the eye wants to feel it, as though separating himself from the other parts of the body. There is such a competition: "I don't want your connection, O body! I want to run towards that direction - a call has come from there." The hands, the eyes, the touch - all faculties will compete; whatever part is touched will want to run away from the other friendly companions.

Once, after conducting the parikrama (circumambulation) of the whole Vraja-mandala (the perimeter of Sri Vrndavana), Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada asked his disciples, "Which pastimes attracted you most? Which location in Vrndavana has attracted you most?" When he asked me this question, I replied that Kadamkhandi, the place of Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhu's bhajana, attracted me most of all. Midway between Nandagram and Yavat there was an asrama where Srila Rupa Goswami settled and used to write his book Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. That place attracted me most. Again, after a year or two, when we were at Sri Radha-Kunda in the company of Srila Prabhupada, he very suddenly remarked, "Your place. That place of yours . . . I was astounded. "What, where is my place?" He said, "Your place is Kadamkhandi, the place of Srila Rupa Goswami." I thought, "Oh, he had some purpose when he inquired a year or two ago which location was attractive to who; he kept these things on his mind, and accordingly today he is saying, 'Your place.' "

So he was very particular about *ruci-pariksa*, or to examine the taste of a particular person for a particular lila and a particular group of service. It is necessary for the Acarya to examine his disciple and determine the place where he is to be located.
He must determine where his disciple stands and accordingly in harmony with that innate taste help him in his march towards that land of his aspiration.

The destination has been settled, but how shall I reach it? When shall I reach it? Those who come to my aid to take me there - they are my masters, my Gurus: Siksa-gurus and Diksa-guru. Whoever helps me to go there is my Guru. He is my guide who will help me to reach my located destination, the station of my innermost hankering (*radhika-madhavasam prapto yasya prathitah krpaya sri-gurum tam nato 'smi*). He has helped me to locate my destination; he has educated me how and what to aspire after, and how to reach that highest aspired shelter. I have attained all these things through him. He is my all-in-all in life, the master of my life. There is a boat, and he is the helmsman (*guru-karnadharam*). I have surrendered unto him, I have accepted him. I have boarded his boat and he is taking me towards the goal of my life.

The human body (*nr-deham*) has been compared to a boat. By utilizing my resources in this body and mind, my Gurudeva, as the helmsman, is guiding me towards the goal. One who does not take this opportunity after coming into the human species commits suicide. He commits suicide by failing to take advantage of cross-ing the ocean of life and death, birth and death, birth and death. The very nature of the ocean of mundane existence is waves - life and death, birth and death. The helmsman to take us across this ocean of life and death, birth and death, is Gurudeva. It is said in the Srimad-Bhagavatam that anyone who misses this chance is committing suicide:

nr-deham adyam sulabham sudurllabham
plavam sukalpam guru-karnadharam
mayanukulena nabhasvateritam
puman bhavabdhim na tares sa atmaha
(Bhagavatam, 11.20.17)

Here, the Lord is inferring, "So many boats are passing, and I am helping like a favorable wind. The helmsman is Guru, and I am the favorable wind. The boat is this human body, and you should all take this opportunity to cross the ocean of life, birth, and death. The world is compared to the infinite. It resembles infinity; it is very difficult to cross the ocean of life and death, birth and death. If you want to escape these troubles (*janma-mrtyu- jara-vyadhi-duhkha-dosanudarsa-nam*), you must take the chance. Otherwise, you will lose so much that it amounts to suicide.

Mahaprabhu's grace presupposes some selection, whereas Nityananda's grace has no selection

The grace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu presupposes some selection, but Sri Nityananda Prabhu's grace has no selection. He gives His grace to whoever He comes across. Nityananda Prabhu is so magnanimous that He saves whoever He comes across on His way. His mercy is so raw, undiscriminating, and broad. Nityananda Prabhu is most benevolent. Mahaprabhu has a sort of discrimination, but Nityananda Prabhu does not care for any discrimination whatsoever. Whether one is a fit or an unfit candidate, he is still counted as worthy. Such is His mercy.

Never dare to approach Sri Sri Radha and Krsna, neglecting the grace of Lord Nityananda (*hena nitai vine bhai, radha-krsna paite nai*). So, our revered Sripada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja laid stress on Nityananda Prabhu. Nityananda Prabhu is Lord Balarama. Nityananda Prabhu's grace is stressed for the fallen; His grace is real wealth for them because discrimination has hardly a place in it. Although not much, we nonetheless find some sort of discrimination in the

magnanimity of Lord Gauranga. But Nityananda Prabhu is more generous. So first go to Nityananda Prabhu, and by His grace you will go to Mahaprabhu. And by the grace of Mahaprabhu you will easily reach Sri Sri Radha-Govinda in Vrndavana. This is the way shown to us.

yatha yatha gaura-padaravinde
vindeta bhaktim krta-punya-rasih
tatha tathotsarpati hrdy akasmad
radha-padambhoja-sudhambu-rasih
(Sri Caitanya-candramrta 88)

"As devotion unto the lotus feet of Sri Gaurasundara is attained by a greatly pious person, unexpectedly the ocean of nectar which is the service of the lotus feet of Sri Radha is accordingly born within his heart."

Percolated by the mercy of Sri Gauranga, try to approach Srimati Radharani. Then there will no possibility of any dirt entering you and disturbing you in that plane. That will be percolated by Sri Gauranga. If you have the shelter of Sri Gauranga you can be sure that you will very safely, smoothly, and intimately attain to the service of Srimati Radharani. Otherwise it is very dangerous, and sometimes suicidal. If you do not approach through Sri Gauranga the attempt will be reactionary. It is very dangerous to approach Sri Vrndavana and Srimati Radharani directly. You must approach commanded by Sri Gauranga. In other words, if you can appreciate the life of Sri Gauranga, the ideal of Sri Gauranga, then *kam*a (mundane desire), etc., will be exhaustively eliminated. You will be really purified to be acceptable to that domain of the highest lila.

So here, in Koladvipa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave His best to all (*kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya, hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya*). He gave the most desirable service, service of the sweetest type. Such service is found in Vrndavana, and Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanya-deva recommended Vrndavana life as the highest. Neither knowledge nor power can even approach this Vrndavana service. In Vrndavana, heart is every-thing. Sri Uddhava also said,

asam aho carana-renu-jusam aham syat,
vrndavane kim api gulma-latausadhinam
ya dustyajam svajanam arya-pathan ca hitva
bhejur mukunda-padavim srutibhir vimrgyam
(Bhagavatam, 10.47.61)

"Ignoring society and even scriptures, they (the Gopis) have given themselves up to the Absolute. They gave up their own relatives, and what is socially considered to be holy; they gave up everything for the cause of the service of the Lord." So Uddhava, the highest type of devotee, said, "I aspire after a birth as a blade of grass or some plant in Vrndavana, so that the feet-dust of the Gopis easily falls on my head." So high is the position of the Gopis and Vrndavana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended that very thing, with the added feature of distributing it to others. Giving it to others, one may have a wholesale dealing with a life so divine. All conceptions of *dharma* (duty), *adharma* (irreligion), jnana (knowledge, renunciation, liberation), etc. - they are very, very low in comparison to these affairs of Vrndavana. Here, the heart is everything. Whoever has tenacity to follow this line has the greatest hope of success in life.

And again, *distya yad asin mat sneho, bhavatinam mad apanah* (Bhagavatam, 10.42.44): "It is supposed that one who gets My connection is fortunate, but I consider it My fortune that I got your (the Gopis') connection. Others say that anyone who gets My connection is fortunate. But I consider Myself fortunate because I have your connection. I am the most fortunate. It is My fortune that I have your connection, so it is sure that I shall be yours - I shall always be yours." Such things were spoken by Krsna when He met the Gopis at Kuruksetra. Such things are unattainable - people cannot even think so high, that such a life is possible. *Bhaktya sanjataya bhaktya* (Bhagavatam, 11.3.31): bhakti will produce more bhakti, and that bhakti will also produce more bhakti - in this way. Nothing else comes as a fruit. Bhakti is such a thing, it is its own reward.

yasyah kadapi vasanancala-khelanottha-
dhanyatidhanya-pavanena krtarthamani
yogindra-durgama-gatir madhusudano 'pi
tasyah namo 'stu vrsabhanubhuvodise 'pi
(Sri Prabodhananda Saraswatipada)

Here it has been told that once the flow of the wind had touched some part of the cloth or dress of Srimati Radharani; that wind touched Krsna's body, and Krsna was besides Himself with cheer, with gladness, with pleasure. "Oh! I felt a touch of the wind that blew past the dress of Radharani - I am so fortunate!" And who is that Krsna? All the religious experts, scholars, yogis, etc., they are all hunting after Krsna's grace and that Krsna, He thinks Himself fortunate if He gets a little touch of the breeze that blew past the dress of Srimati Radharani. So pure is Srimati Radharani. Her surrender, Her service, is so pure, that even a touch of that wind makes Krsna, Bhagavan, the Supreme Lord Himself, think that He has gained the highest fortune. He feels, "I am so fulfilled in My life."

Srimati Radharani's position is first and foremost. Sri Jayadeva Goswami has written that Krsna wants the feet-dust of Srimati Radharani (*dehi pada-pallavam udaram*, Gita Govinda). However, ordinary people cannot understand this. Only the followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by His grace, can understand anything of the substance of Radha-dasyam, the servitude of Srimati Radharani. So Radha-dasyam is the highest aspiration of the Gaudiya Vaisnava.

After Sri Caitanyadeva took sannyasa, He wandered throughout South India, and conquered the religious conceptions there. At Benares, Sri Svarupa Damodara also wanted to take sannyasa, but the function was half-done. When the Lord arrived at Puri, Sri Svarupa Damodara became as though mad, and with his sannyasa-function half-completed he ran to Puri. His name was Purusottama, and his brahma-cari name was Svarupa Ananda. So, with this name still, he ran to Puri, like a madman, to see his guardian and friend, his everything. He greeted Sri Caitanyadeva with this sloka:

helodhunita-khedaya visadaya pronmilad amodaya
samyac-chastra-vivadaya rasadaya cittarpitonmadaya
sasvad-bhaktivinodaya samadaya madhurya-maryadaya
sri-caitanya-dayanidhe tava daya bhuyad amandodaya
(Sri Caitanyacandrodaya-nataka)

"O ocean of mercy, Sri Caitanya - that mercy which effortlessly dispels all lamentation; that mercy within which absolute purity resides; that mercy within which supreme ecstasy is revealed (overshadowing all else); that mercy which ends all scriptural debates by its appearance; that mercy which charms all directions by its pastimes of divine love - by its absolute sweetness may that all-expansive mercy of Yours, the bestower of all goodness, awaken in our hearts."

Sri Svarupa Damodara fell at the feet of Sri Caitanyadeva, with this sloka on his lips. "O great ocean of mercy, Sri Caitanyadeva, let Your grace be distributed to one and all. You are the ocean of grace let that grace be distributed to one and all. It is the grace which once begun never comes to end in any other wave; it will never produce any bad thing thereafter. Your daya, Your mercy, is of such quality that if anyone gets a particle of it, then in no time that mercy will eliminate any bad position. Mando means Ôbad position,' so *amandodaya* is such *daya* that won't bring inauspiciousness at any time." Like a mad friend fallen at his feet, Sri Svarupa Damodara sang this sloka to Sri Caitanyadeva. In the line of instruction from Sri Caitanyadeva, Sri Svarupa Damodara is first, then Sri Rupa-Sanatana (*visvambhara priyankara, sri-svarupa-damodara, sri-goswami rupa-sanatana*). Sri Svarupa Damodara's position is such. In Vrndavana, his position is Lalita-sakhi. *Bhuyad* means *asirvada*, blessings; "I bestow my blessings to one and all; one and all may get the blessings of Sri Caitanyadeva."

A hint of the particular standard of Srimati Lalita Devi's service has been given by Srila Rupa Goswami:

radha-mukunda-pada-sambhava-gharmabindu--
nirmancanopakarane krta-deha-laksyam

When Lalita Devi finds a drop of perspiration at the feet of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, she furiously engages herself to remove it. "How has it come there? We are circumambulating Them to see that not the least pain can enter this domain to trouble Them. But how without our notice has this perspiration appeared? Perspiration, perspiration!"So she is furiously chastising herself, and wants to immediately take birth one lakh (100,000) times - with that force she comes to remove that drop of perspiration from the lotus feet of either of the Divine Couple. If the least difficulty is seen in the serving area, the Lord's Associates can't tolerate it in any way, and such eagerness, self-abuse and earnestness is found in them. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said,

sanatana, deha-tyage krsna yadi paiye
koti-deha ksaneke tabe chadite pariye
(Chaitanya-charitamrita, Antya 4.56)

"O Sanatana, to attain the service of Krsna, I want to immediately die ten million times. I am ready to embrace ten million deaths if that will help me serve Him."

The *Hladini-sakti*, the feeling potency, is Srimati Radharani. Even She feels dissatisfaction within Herself; "I can't . . ." This holds the extreme position: "I can't do My service, My duty; I can't do it."

At the meeting in Syamanta-pancaka at Kuruksetra, Krsna Himself suddenly fell at Srimati Radharani's feet and begged forgiveness: "I am an offender, a criminal to your position. You are so

self-giving, I cannot fulfill My real duty towards You. Your service to Me is so loving, I can't do My duty to You." But Srimati Radharani said, "It is I who am committing offenses, because I am still living despite Your separation. In Your separation I am still living - that proves that I am the offender. I am the offender, not You, because I am living. That is sufficient proof that I am not fit for You. Why did I not die with the separation? There is the proof."

Krsna fell at Her feet: "Your position is so high, so high. So long I was without You, increasing My different duties. Without trying to satisfy You, I engaged Myself in consideration of different duties." But Srimati Radharani said, "No, no, it is I who am the offender, that I did not die without Your company. We find in the scriptures that the male has such freedom, but not the female. So I should have died in the separation, and You have no offense that You left Me to do so many duties here and there. You have so many duties to discharge, but I am only for Your service. As such, I could not keep up the standard." Such was the meeting at Kuruksetra.

So in Krsna's pastimes, the potencies are *Sandhini, Samvit*, and *Hladini*. *Hladini* holds the highest position because of wholesale self-surrender. Next is *Samvit*, and then third is the position of the *Sandhini*. Thinking, feeling, and willing: willing is *Sandhini*, thinking is *Samvit*, and feeling is *Hladini*. Ordinarily we may think that feeling is the last of all, but no, it is the first. Feeling is first. Feeling, real feeling, has been given such a high position. We are all under feeling. We are all searching, and feeling is commanding. We think feeling is the result. No. Feeling is commanding everything. First feeling, then thinking, then willing. Generally the *karmis* give the better hand to willing - willpower - all command; and the *jnanis* place everything in thinking - "We command the will, so we are holding the high position." But feeling is at the basis of everything. He, or It, or She - is commanding everything. It has been told like that; we have to understand the position of feeling. Hare Krsna.